AKIRA 13™

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

CHAPTER 13

DESPERATION

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where the first of the bombs fell thirty-eight years before. There, a band of teenaged delinquents led by **Kaneda** encounter **Number 26**—a terrified child who possesses extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends, then vanishes.

As a result, **Kaneda** and **Tetsuo** become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by a man known only as the **Colonel** and an underground resistance group, bent on putting a stop to the Colonel's activities.

Among the resistance, **Kaneda** meets **Kay**—a girl he alternately maddens and tries to seduce—and Kay's "brother", **Ryu**. The leaders of the resistance include **Nezu**—who publically leads the political party that opposes the government—and a powerful religious leader with strong precognitive gifts, **Lady Miyako**.

The **Colonel** has a number of children under his control, each one possessing a distinct set of psychic talents and identified by a number marked on their hand. (**Lady Miyako** was, at one time, Number 19 in this series.) One of the children, the mental giant **Akira**, is so powerful that since the war he has been buried beneath the earth's surface, suspended in cryogenic sleep.

The Colonel's chief medical advisor subjects **Tetsuo** to painful electronic and chemical experiments, awakening tremendous telepathic potential in the boy, who is redubbed **Number 41**. Unfortunately, as his powers appear, a monstrous side of Tetsuo's nature also surfaces. Able to shrug off the most serious injuries, **Tetsuo** goes on a killing spree. He eventually murders one of Kaneda's closest friends and attacks **Kaneda**, who, along with **Kay**, is taken to the Colonel's installation.

Kaneda **Kay** **Sakaki** **Akira**

Unable to tolerate the notion that **Akira** may be more powerful than he is, **Tetsuo** leaves the Colonel's installation, determined to find his rival. The psychic children, like **Lady Miyako**, fear Akira's power and are worried about the disaster Tetsuo may unleash. They use their talents to help **Kaneda** and **Kay** escape, and the pair follow **Tetsuo** to the Olympic site, below which **Akira** rests. There, they are almost reunited with **Ryu**, who is working undercover as a soldier.

Hoping to prevent a disaster, the **Colonel** follows with his troops and scientists. When everyone arrives at the site, fighting breaks out.

Tetsuo easily repels attacks by wave after wave of soldiers armed with the most sophisticated weaponry. The scientists monitoring Akira's cryosleep discover that the temperature in Akira's chamber is beginning to rise. They deduce that even in hibernation, Akira's power is responding to Tetsuo's psychic energy.

Seeking a way out, **Kay** and **Kaneda** instead find their way to Akira's chamber. They watch from hiding as **Tetsuo** heads towards the chamber's entrance.

The **Colonel** orders his troops to fall back, and take cover. Intense cold from the growing crackes in Akira's chamber spills throughout the site, indicating that Akira is close to consciousness. Just as **Tetsuo** reaches Akira's resting place, the cryogenic chamber begins to crack from within, and **Akira** emerges.

The paranormal giant is still dazed and weak with the

Ryu

Kiyoko

The Colonel

Tetsuo

aftereffects of his coma. He is unable to speak, shy of bright lights, and easily ordered about. **Tetsuo** and he begin to make their way to the surface. **Kay** and **Kaneda**, realizing that they must move or perish, also manage to reach the surface. **Ryu** is saved by soldiers who still believe he is one of them.

Terror sweeps the control room, as the **Colonel** tries desperately to prevent panicking. A scientist triggers a Code 7 Emergency Alarm. The civilian defense system kicks in and mayhem takes over on the streets. Neo-Tokyo holds its collective breath waiting for the bombs to fall again.

Terrified of what has been unleashed and determined to act before a greater catastrophe occurs, the **Colonel** summons the powerful **SOL** military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira.** The two boys are separated by the blasts. **Akira** is saved by **Kay** and **Kaneda**. **Tetsuo** is less fortunate, the laser strikes his left arm.

Neo-Tokyo is placed in a state of military emergency following the disaster. Backing up the troops are **"caretaker" robots** who patrol the streets, dealing harshly with looters and restoring order. The **Colonel**—managing to conceal the truth about what has occurred, despite leaks to the media—plans to use the emergency as an excuse to hunt down and destroy the resistance once and for all.

Lady Miyako, warns **Nezu** to hold his people in reserve. She then calls upon **Sakaki**, a young girl trained in techniques of infiltration, observation, and combat, and asks her to find **Akira**.

Kay and **Kaneda** take shelter with **Chiyoko**, a formidable woman in the resistance. Without Kaneda's knowledge, **Kay** meets with **Nezu** and agrees to turn the still-somnolent **Akira** over to him. When **Ryu**, still recovering from the frostbite he suffered at the Olympic site, also reports to **Nezu**, who chooses not to bring him up to date on the status of **Akira**. He also denies any knowledge of Kay's whereabouts.

Sakaki follows **Kay** back to Chiyoko's hideout, where she rouses **Akira** and leads him away. **Kaneda** is unable to stop **Sakaki**, but manages to alert **Kay** and **Chiyoko**.

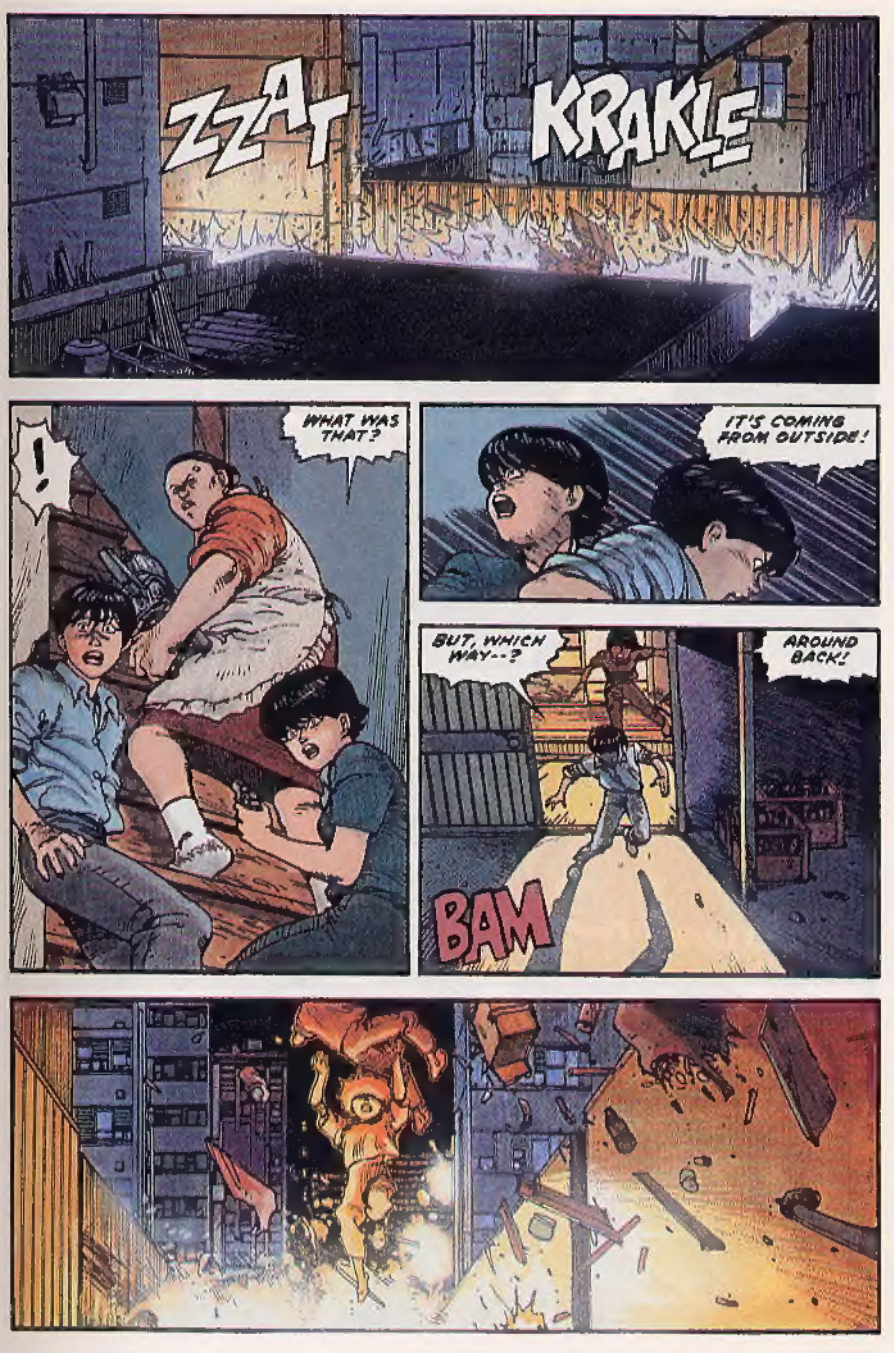
Sakaki and **Akira** safely reach the street...and are cornered by caretaker robots.

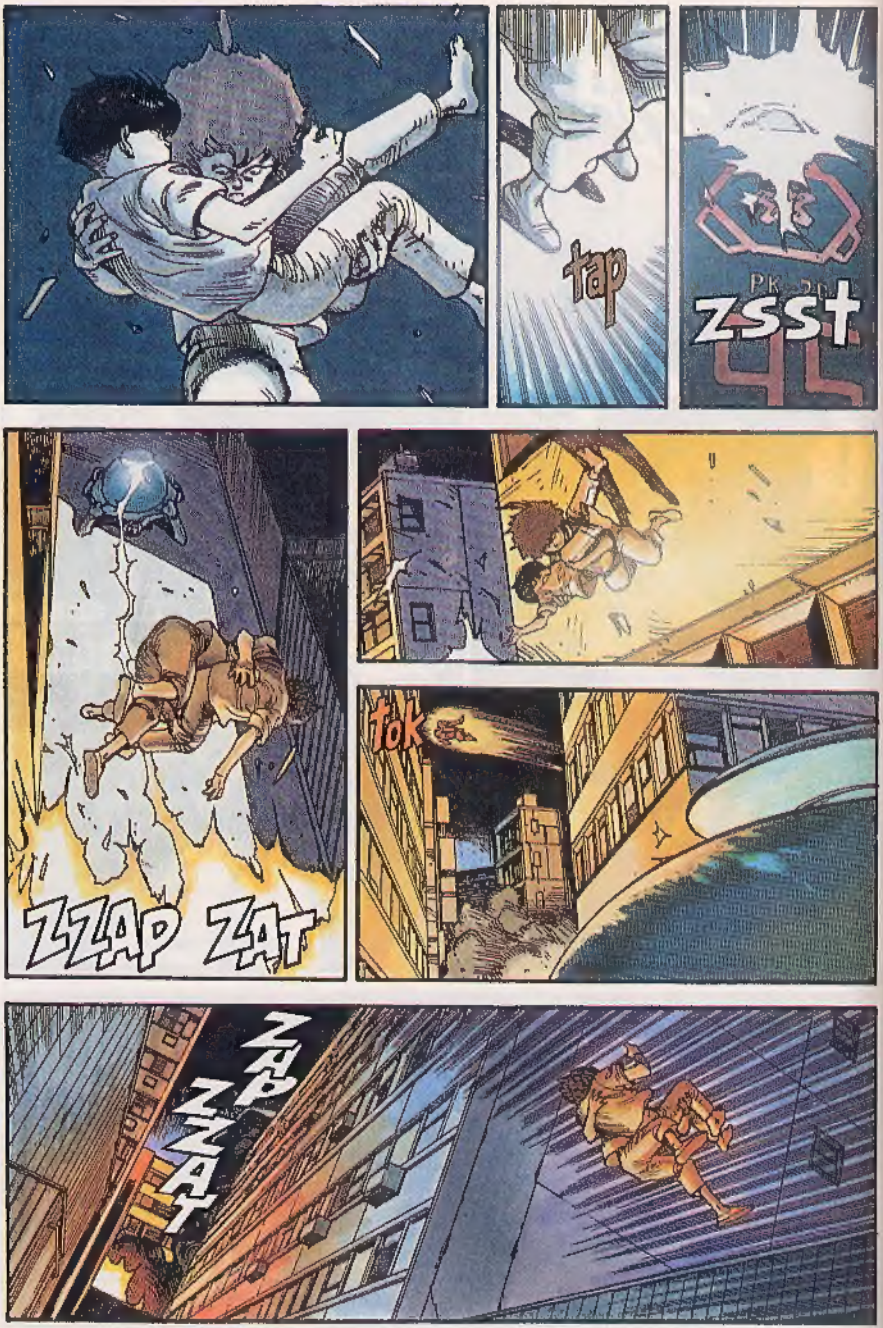
Takashi

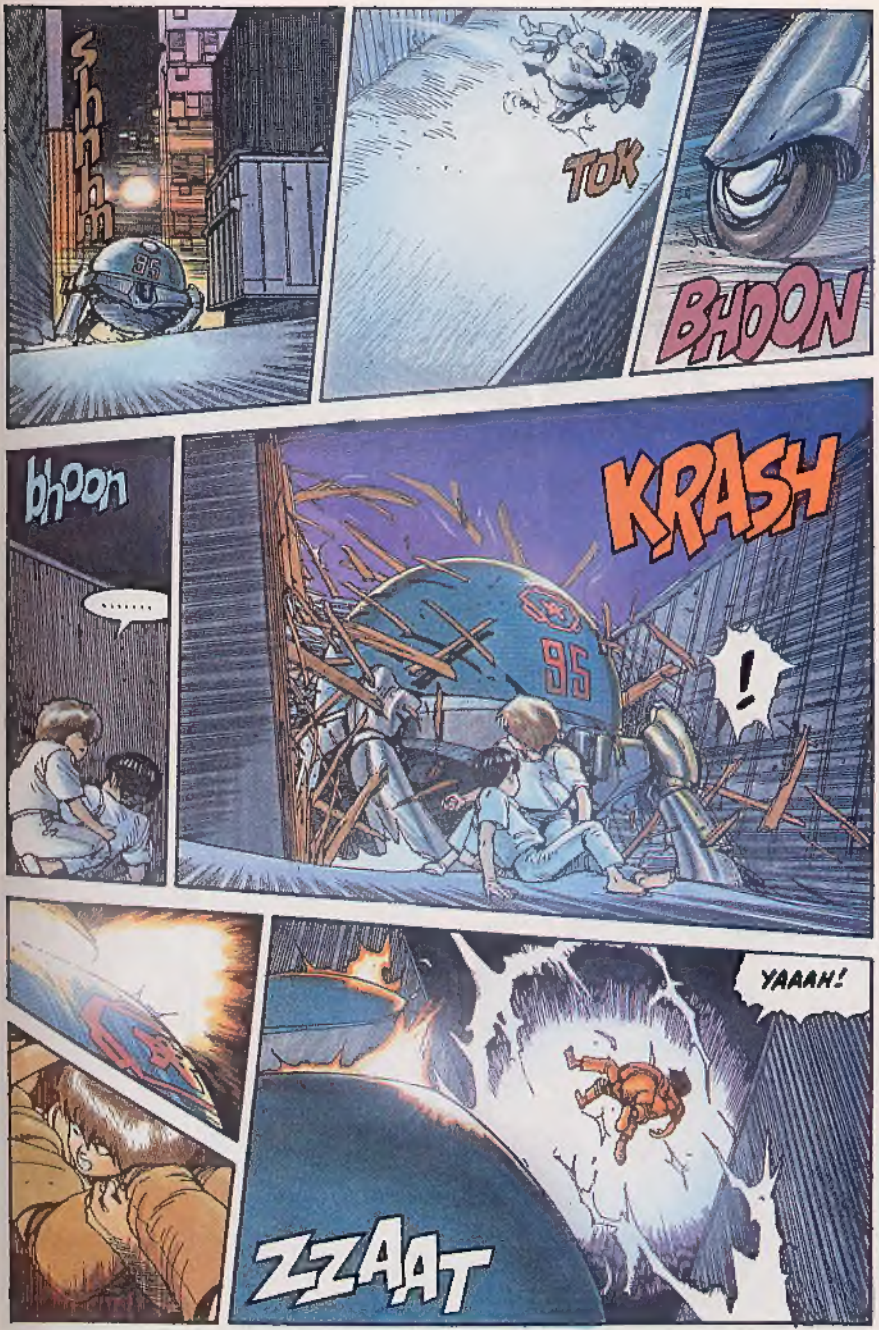
Lady Miyako

Nezu

Chiyoko

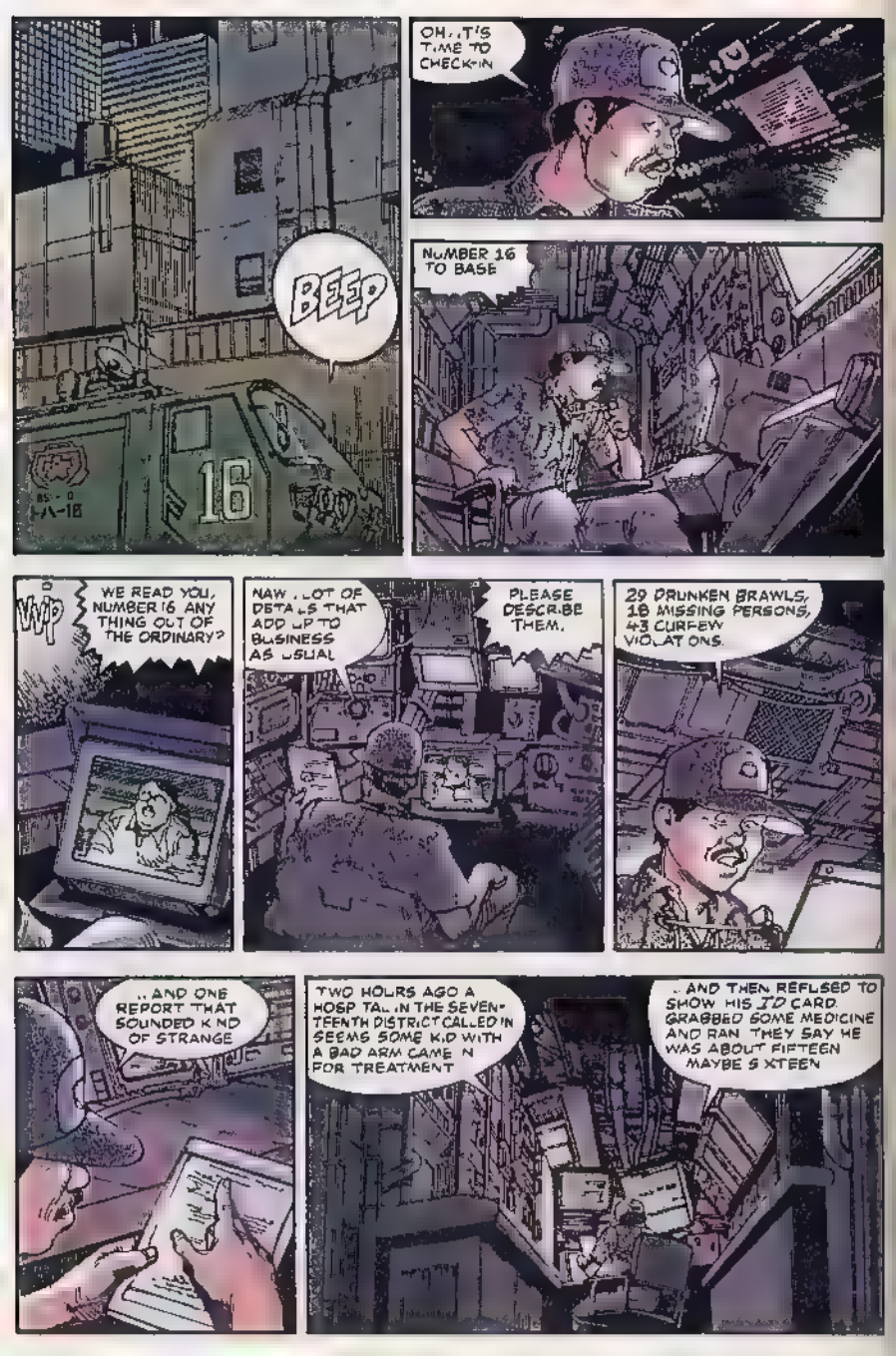

ZZAT
KRAKLE
!
WHAT WAS THAT?
IT'S COMING FROM OUTSIDE!
BUT, WHICH WAY--?
AROUND BACK!
BAM

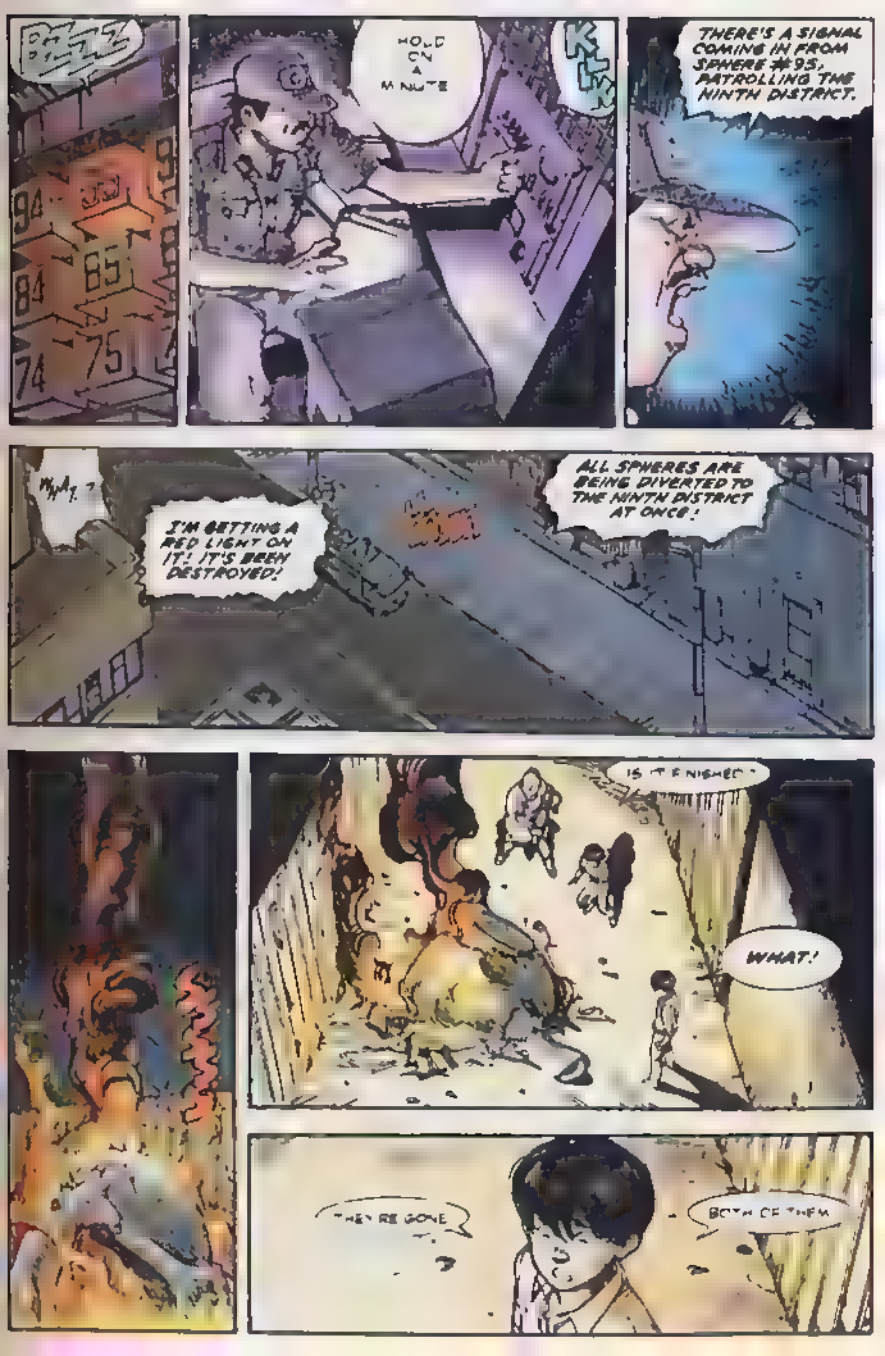

tap
PK 20
ZSST
ZZAP ZAT
fok
ZAP
ZZAT


shhh
95
TOK
BHOON
bhoon
.....
KRASH
95
!
YAAAH!
ZZAAT

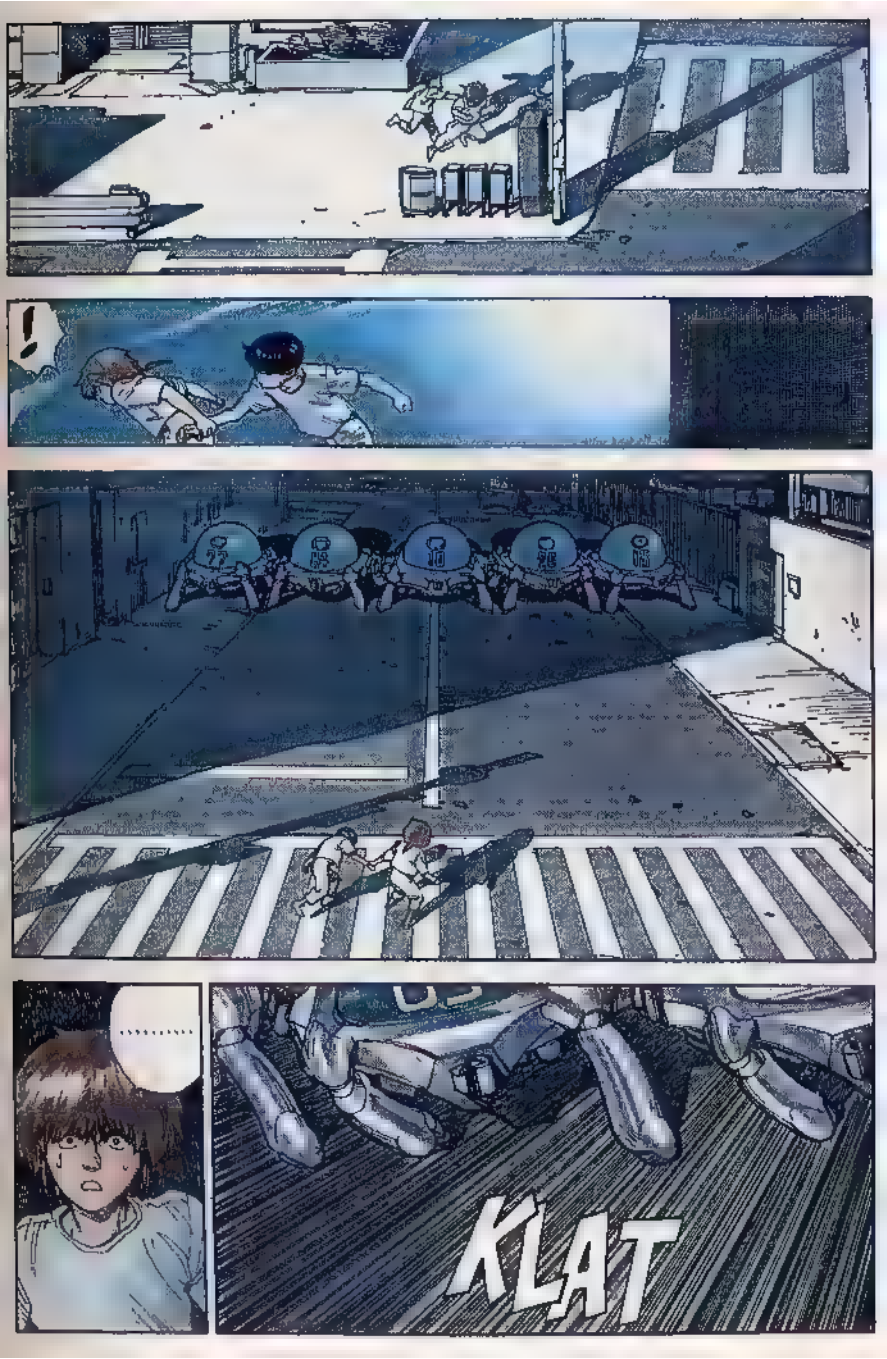
THUD
THAK
BHOOOM
WHIRR
KLIK
-171—1-
CHAAARGE!
TAK
TAK
TAK
WARNING!
WARNING!
ANY ATTEMPT TO BREACH THE PEACE WILL BE SEVERELY PUNISHED!
ZZZT
ZZZT
NOW!
SMAK
BLAM

RATA TATAT
KANEDA, RUN!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
I AM RUNNING
KLONK
YOW!


BEEP
16
OH, IT'S TIME TO CHECK-IN
NUMBER 16 TO BASE
VVVP
WE READ YOU, NUMBER 16 ANY THING OUT OF THE ORDINARY?
NAW, LOT OF DETAILS THAT ADD UP TO BUSINESS AS USUAL
PLEASE DESCRIBE THEM.
29 DRUNKEN BRAWLS, 18 MISSING PERSONS, 43 CURFEW VIOLATIONS.
.. AND ONE REPORT THAT SOUNDED KIND OF STRANGE
TWO HOURS AGO A HOSPITAL IN THE SEVENTEENTH DISTRICT CALLED IN SEEMS SOME KID WITH A BAD ARM CAME IN FOR TREATMENT
.. AND THEN REFUSED TO SHOW HIS ID CARD. GRABBED SOME MEDICINE AND RAN. THEY SAY HE WAS ABOUT FIFTEEN MAYBE SIXTEEN


BEEP BEEP
94
84
85
74
75
HOLD ON A MINUTE
KLK
THERE'S A SIGNAL COMING IN FROM SPHERE #95, PATROLLING THE NINTH DISTRICT.
MM?
I'M GETTING A RED LIGHT ON IT! IT'S BEEN DESTROYED!
ALL SPHERES ARE BEING DIVERTED TO THE NINTH DISTRICT AT ONCE!
IS IT FINISHED?
WHAT!
THEY'RE GONE
BOTH OF THEM

THERE THEY GO!
HOW CAN THEY MOVE SO FAST?
I TOLD YOU SHE'S NOT NORMAL


!
.....
KLAT

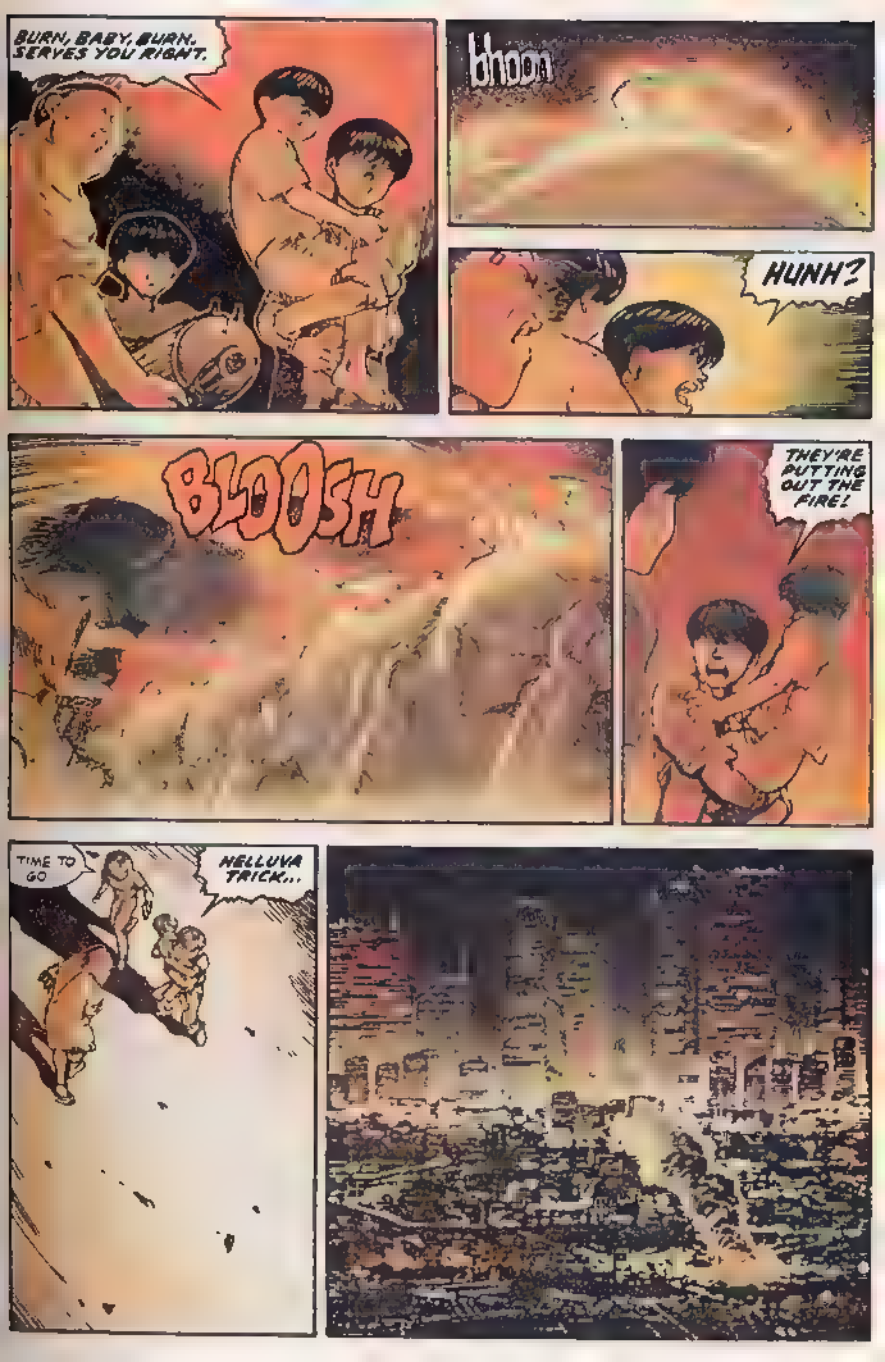
SSH!
AUGH!
IT'S A PATROL!
HALT! THE THREE OF YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!
EAT THIS!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
KRAK
BUDDA BUDDA
YAAAH!
FIRE!
TA TA TA TA
YIPE!
BUDDA BUDDA

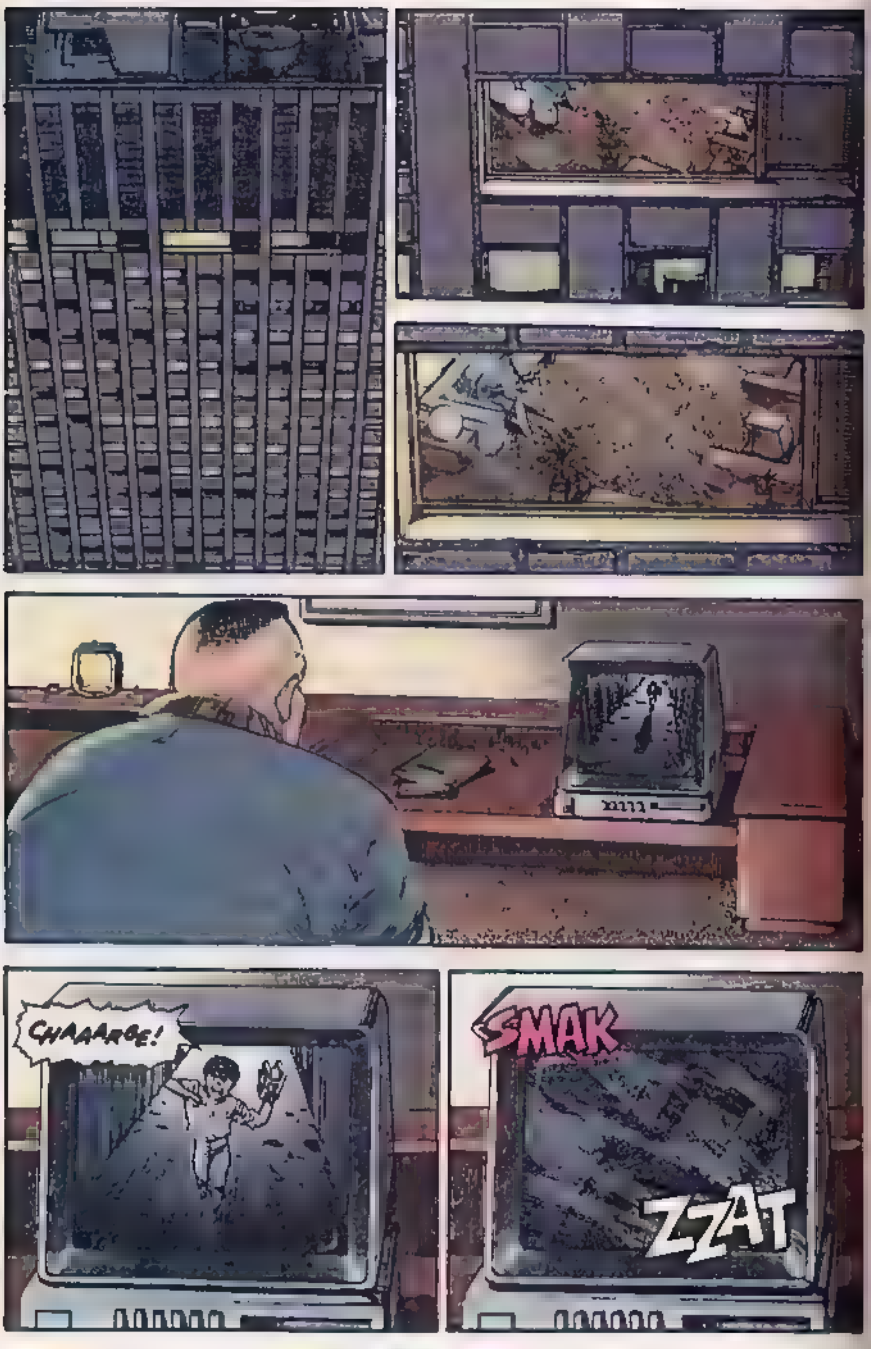
YOU COULDN'T HIT THE BROAD SIDE OF A BARN!
CAN YOU'D HURRY!
BHOOM
TA TA TA TA TA TA
SHIT!!
BHUOON
OOON
GRRR!

BHOOON
!
mma--
Z
--AAUGH!!
GONG

LOOK OUT!
81
THOP
GOONS
HEY!!
uhh uhh

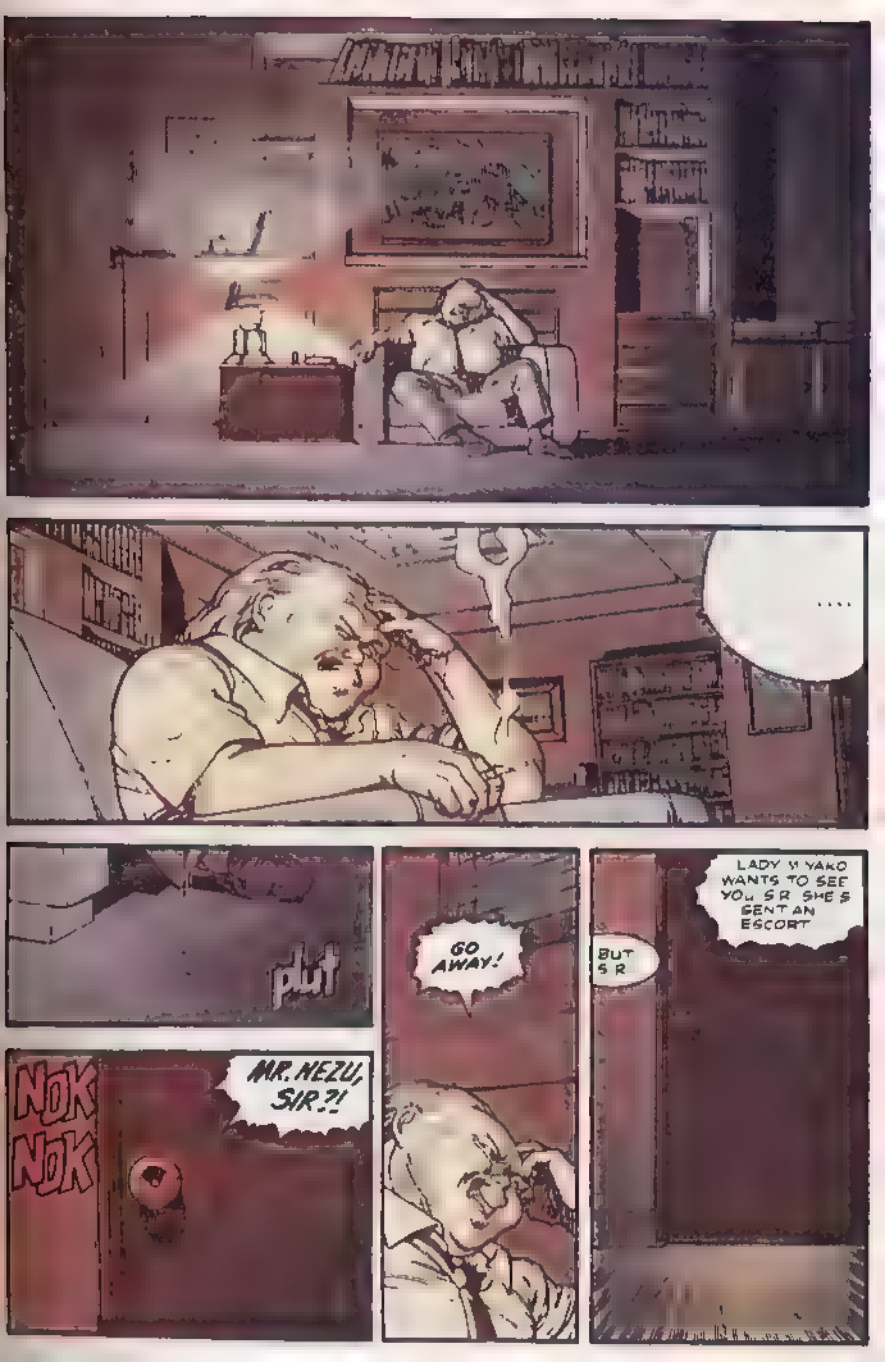
BLIP
DAMN.
OW.
WHAT.?
TRY THIS ON FOR SIZE!
BUDDA BUDDA
BOOOM
KANEDA!
OVER HERE!


BURN, BABY, BURN. SERVES YOU RIGHT.
bhoom
HUNH?
BLOOSH
THEY'RE PUTTING OUT THE FIRE!
TIME TO GO
HELLUVA TRICK...

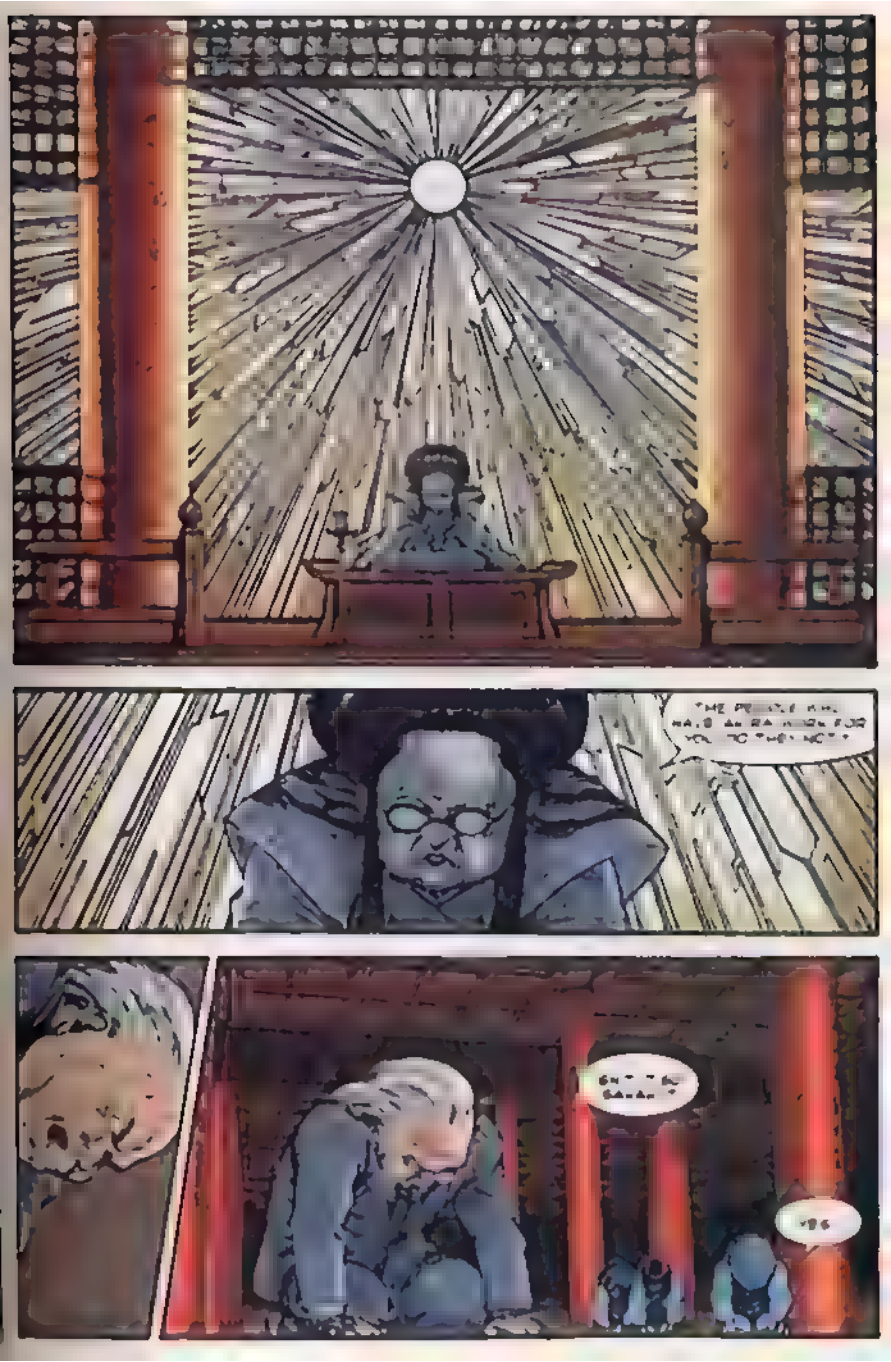

CHAAARGE!
SMAK
ZZAT

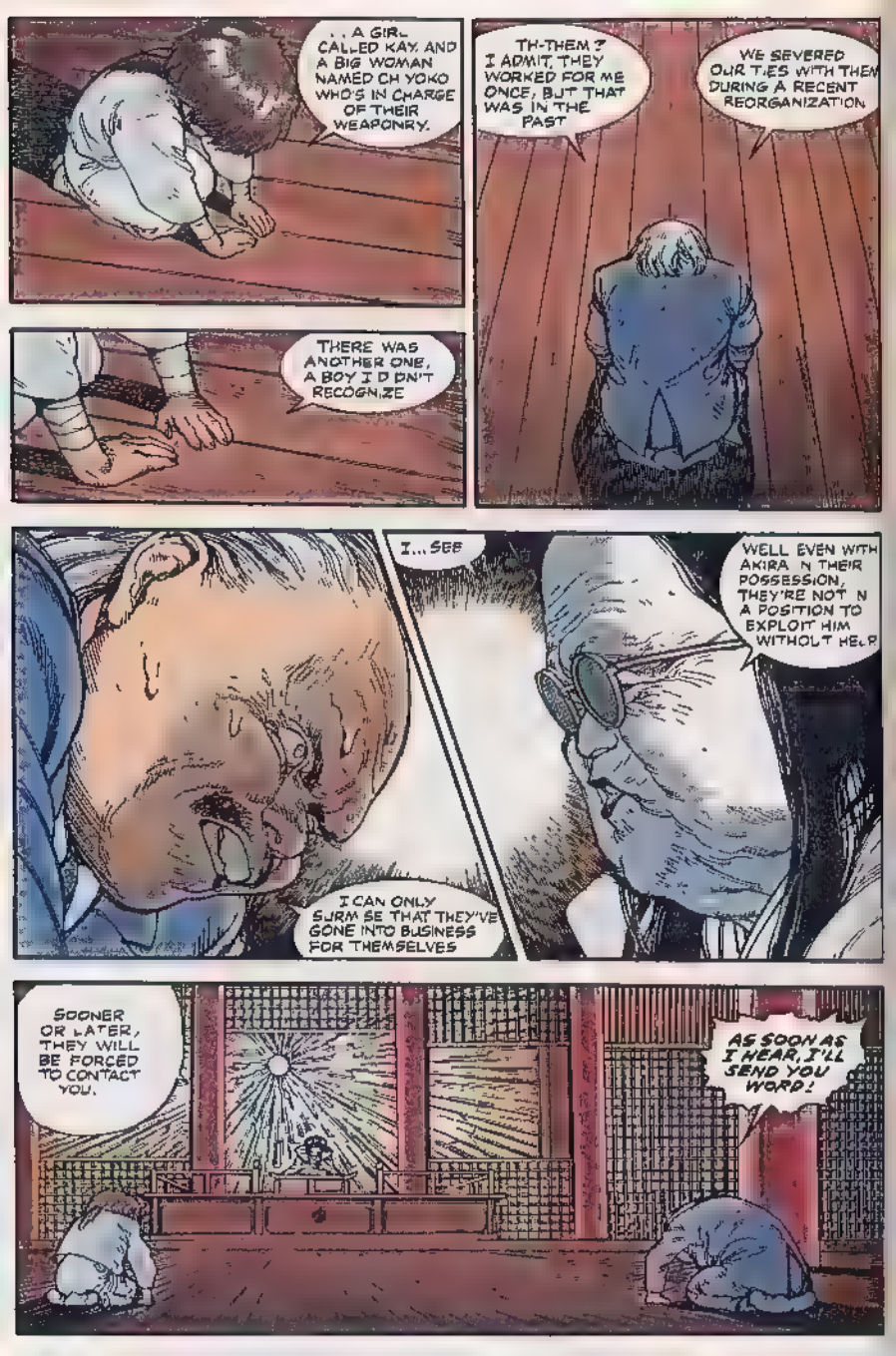
THIS WAS THE LAST IMAGE WE GOT FROM #95 TRANSMISSION ENDED WHEN T WAS DESTROYED
COLONEL
I WANT TO SEE PART OF IT AGAIN. TAKE IT BACK TO FIVE MINUTES BEFORE DESTRUC- T ON
Y-YESSIR RIGHT AWAY.
ZZAAA
AKIRA...

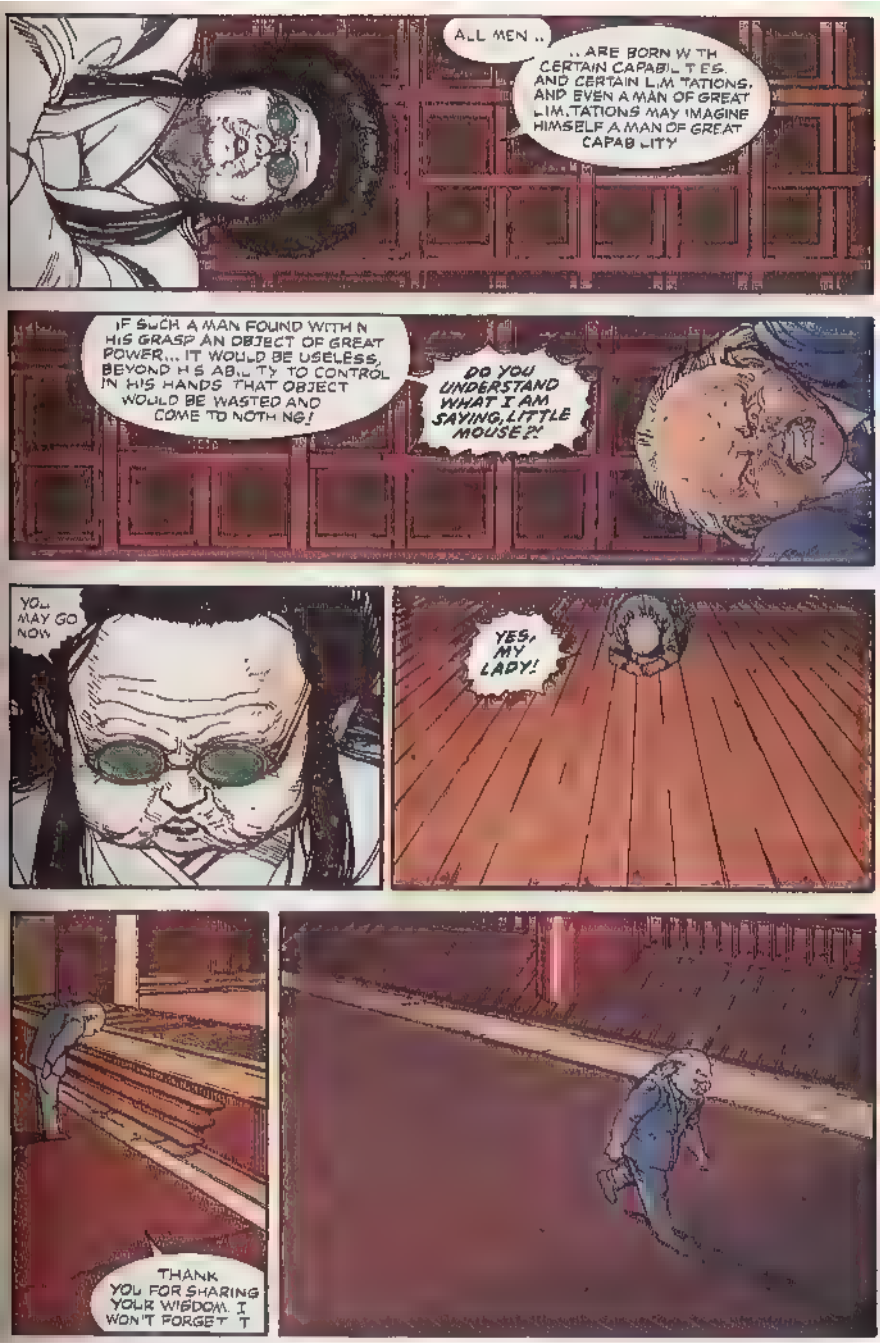
BEEP
bip
IT'S ME
MR NEZU, THERE'S A CALL FROM A YOUNG WOMAN NAMED KAY. SHE INSISTS ON SPEAKING WITH YOU DIRECTLY SAYS IT'S URGENT.
PUT HER THROUGH

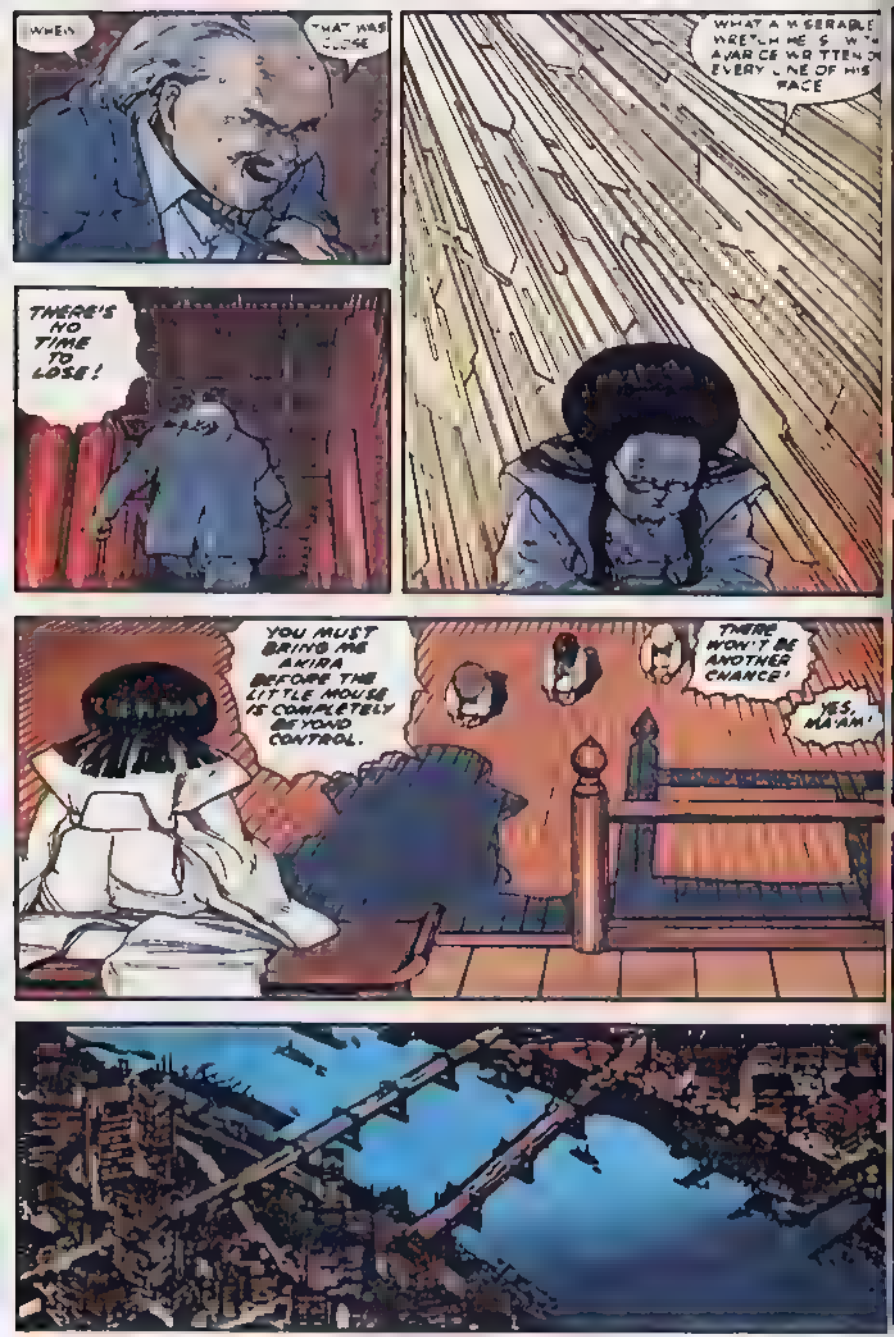

....
plut
NOK NOK
MR. NEZU, SIR.?!
GO AWAY!
BUT SIR
LADY YUKO WANTS TO SEE YOU. SIR SHE'S SENT AN ESCORT

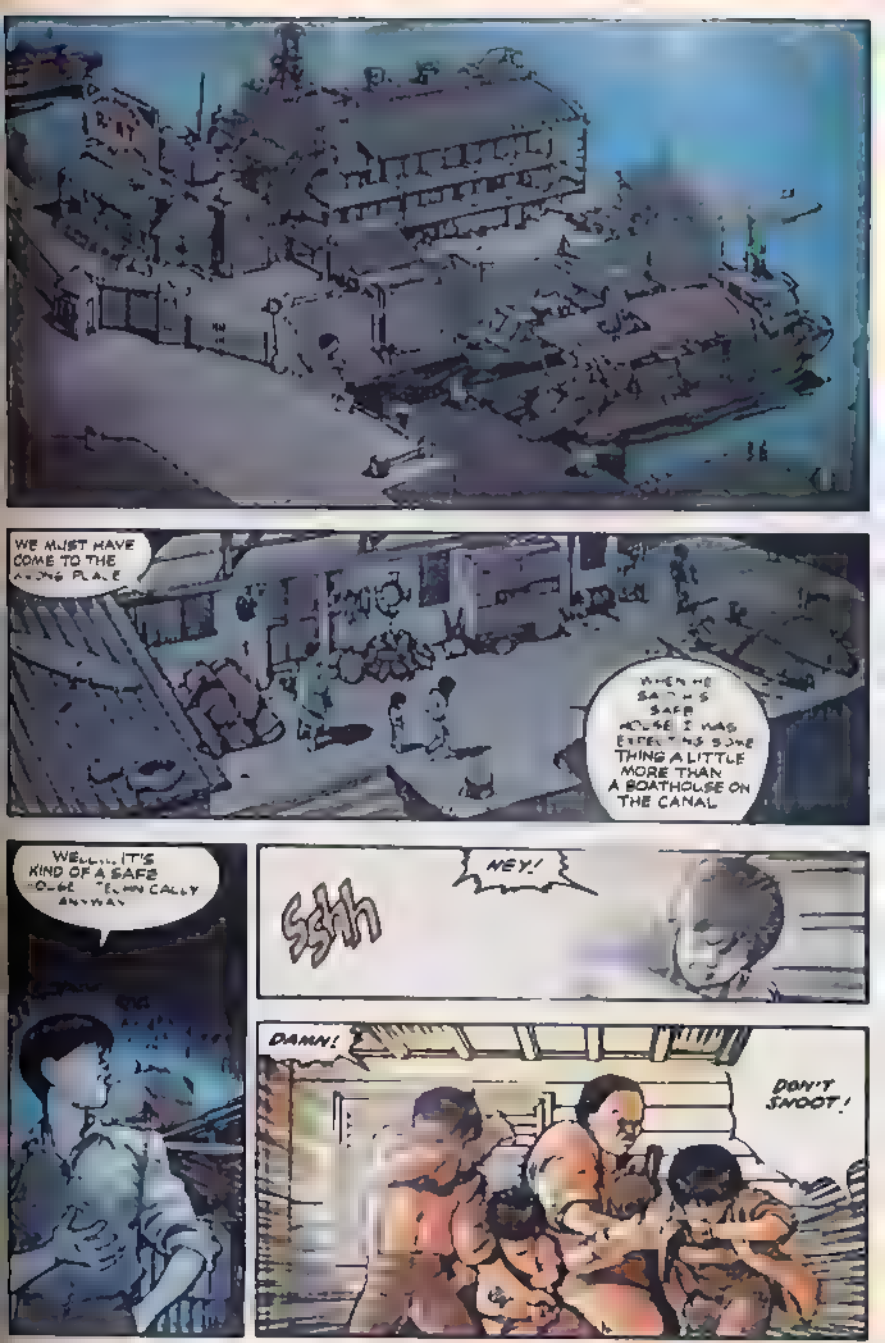
LADY MIYAKO EXPECTS YOU NOW!
I'VE BROUGHT MR NEZU
LADY MIYAKO IS WAITING IN THE HALL OF WORSHIP




. . A GIRL CALLED KAY, AND A BIG WOMAN NAMED CH YOKO WHO'S IN CHARGE OF THEIR WEAPONRY.
TH-THEM? I ADMIT, THEY WORKED FOR ME ONCE, BUT THAT WAS IN THE PAST
WE SEVERED OUR T.ES WITH THEM DURING A RECENT REORGANIZATION.
THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE, A BOY I D DN'T RECOGN.ZE
I...SEE
WELL EVEN WITH AKIRA N THEIR POSSESSION, THEY'RE NOT N A POSITION TO EXPLOIT HIM WITHOLT HELP
I CAN ONLY SURM SE THAT THEY'VE GONE INTO BUSINESS FOR THEMSELVES
SOONER OR LATER, THEY WILL BE FORCED TO CONTACT YOU.
AS SOON AS I HEAR, I'LL SEND YOU WORD!

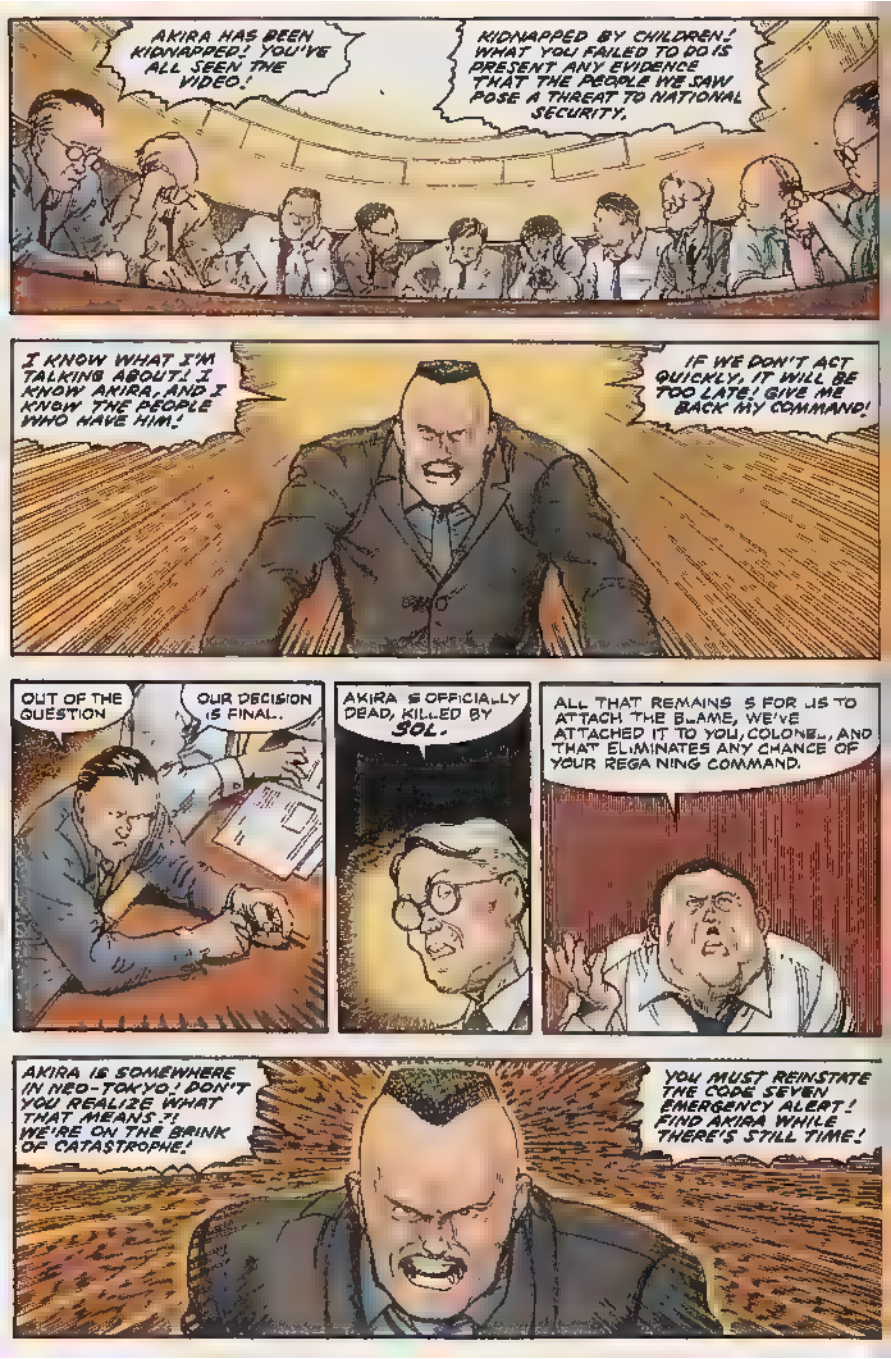

ALL MEN ..
..ARE BORN W TH CERTAIN CAPABIL T ES. AND CERTAIN L.M TATIONS, AND EVEN A MAN OF GREAT L.M.TATIONS MAY IMAGINE HIMSELF A MAN OF GREAT CAPAB LITY
IF SUCH A MAN FOUND WITH N HIS GRASP AN OBJECT OF GREAT POWER... IT WOULD BE USELESS, BEYOND H S AB.L TY TO CONTROL IN HIS HANDS THAT OBJECT WOULD BE WASTED AND COME TO NOTH NG!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM SAYING, LITTLE MOUSE?!
YOU MAY GO NOW
YES, MY LADY!
THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR WISDOM. I WON'T FORGET T


WHEW
THAT WAS CLOSE
WHAT A MISERABLE WRETCH ME IS WITH AVARICE WRITTEN ON EVERY LINE OF HIS FACE
THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE!
YOU MUST BRING ME AKIRA BEFORE THE LITTLE MOUSE IS COMPLETELY BEYOND CONTROL.
THERE WON'T BE ANOTHER CHANCE!
YES, MA'AM!

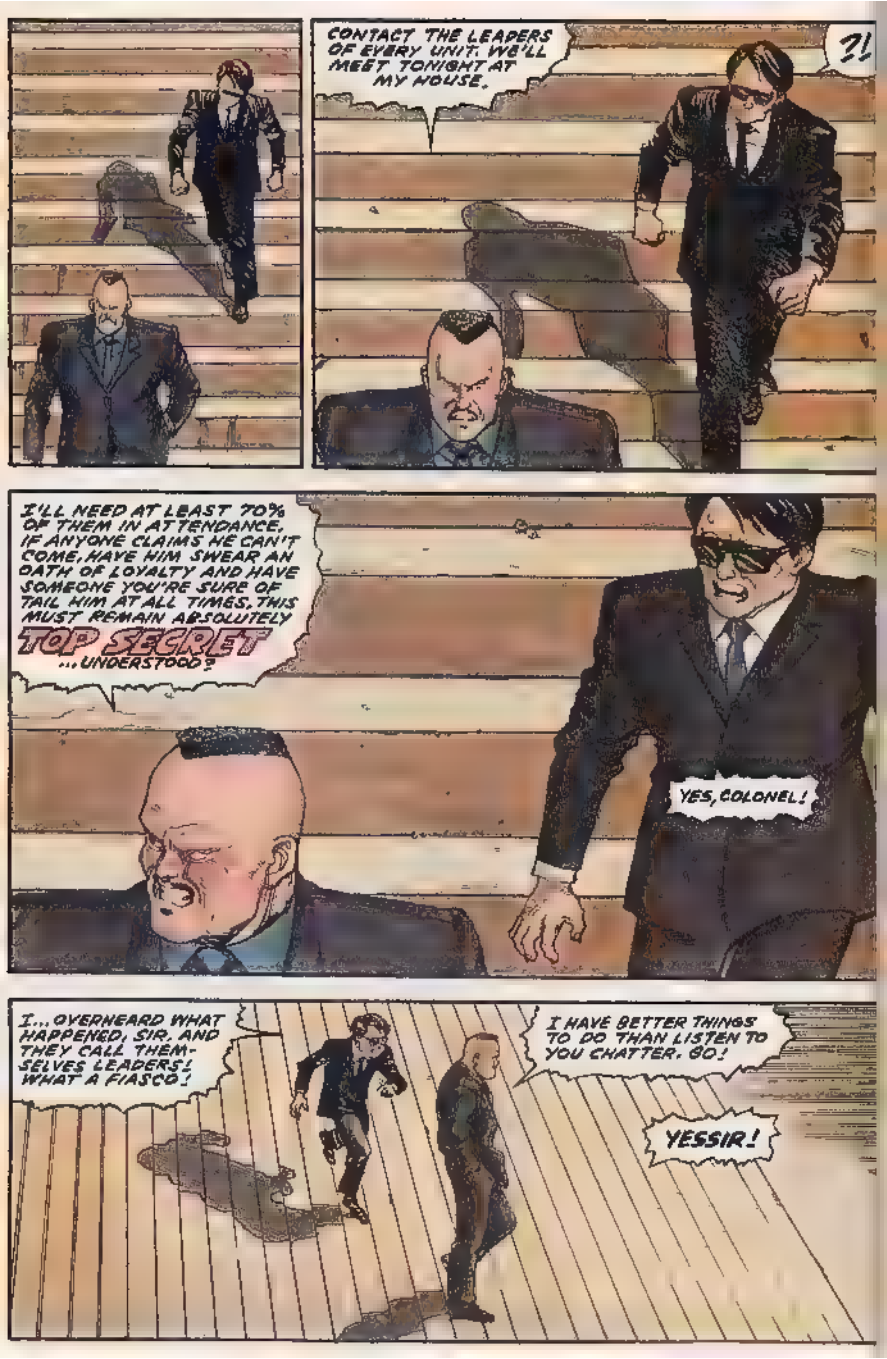

WE MUST HAVE COME TO THE WRONG PLACE
WHEN HE SAID HIS SAFE HOUSE I WAS EXPECTING SOME THING A LITTLE MORE THAN A BOATHOUSE ON THE CANAL
WELL... IT'S KIND OF A SAFE HOUSE TECHNICALLY ANYWAY
Sshh
HEY!
DAMN!
DON'T SHOOT!

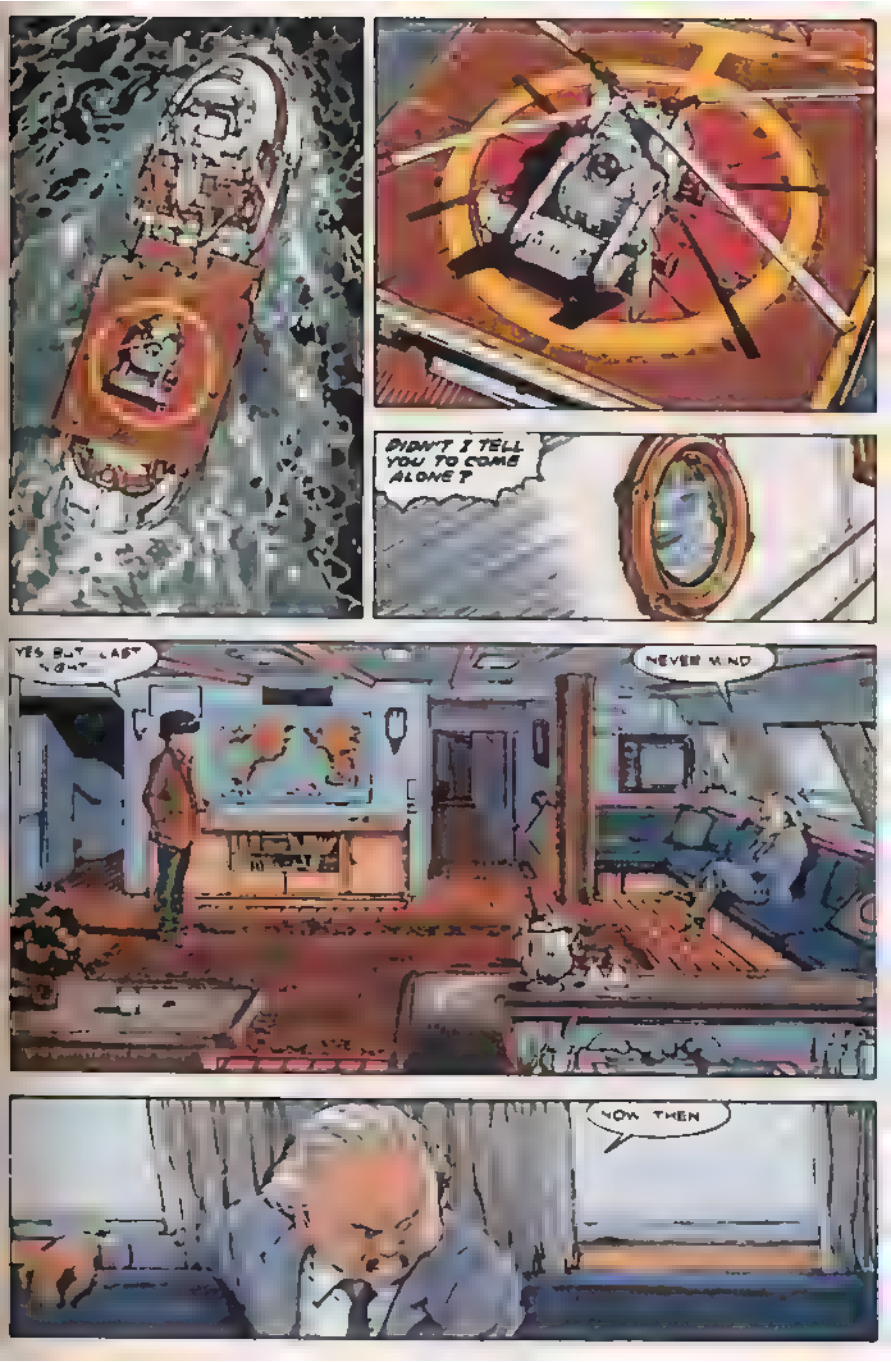
MY NAME IS KAY! WE'VE BROUGHT YOU AKIRA!
SSh

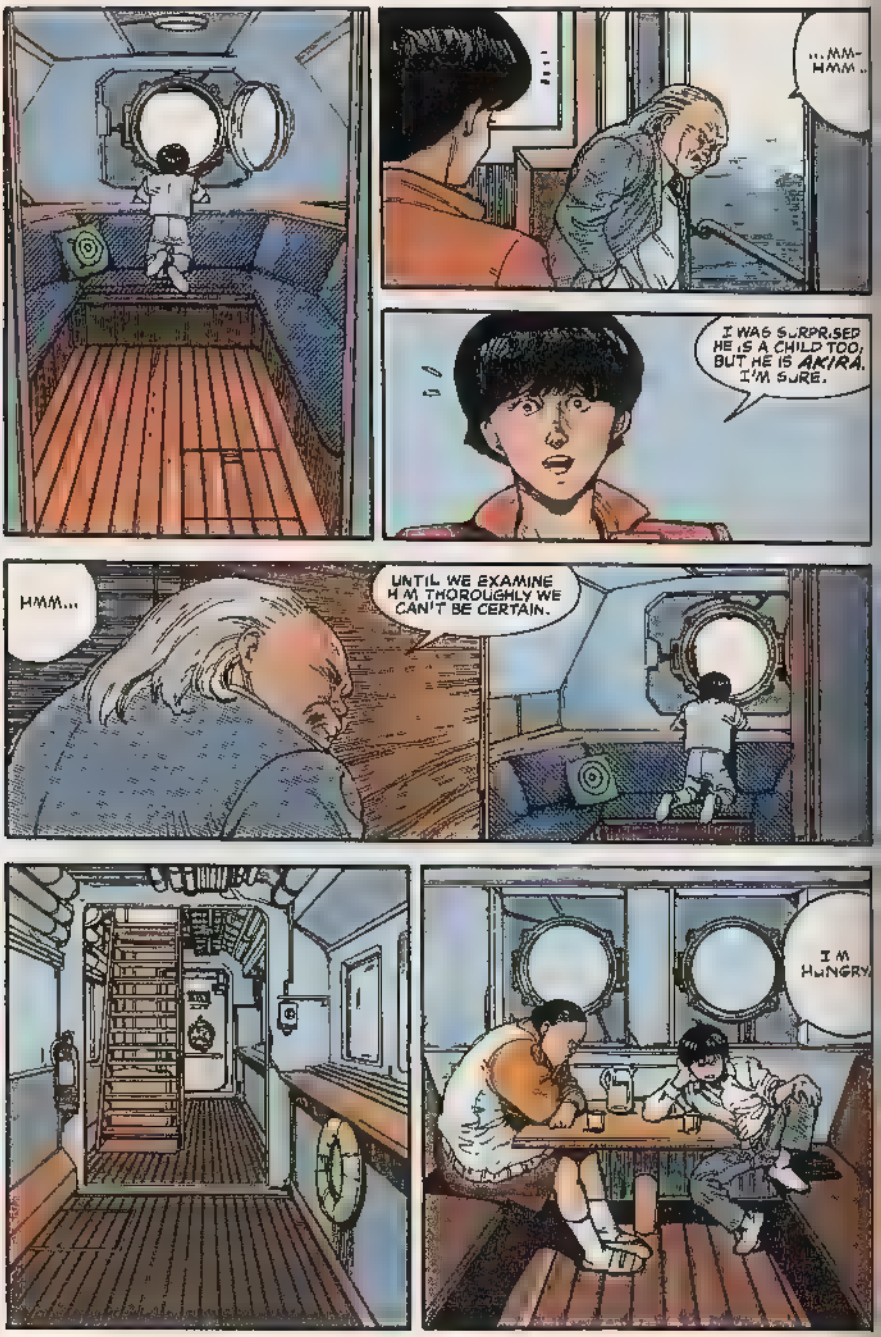
BE CAREFUL ON THE GANG-PLANK
MR NEZU SENT ME
SOMETHING URGENT CAME UP OR HE'D HAVE MET YOU HERE IN PERSON
FOR THE MOMENT
...HE'D LIKE YOU ALL TO JUST REST AND TAKE IT EASY.
WALK THIS WAY
MR. NEZU WILL BE HERE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.
THAT'S A LIE!
BAM
COLONEL...
WHY YOU PERSIST IN REPEATING THESE FABRICATIONS IS BEYOND UNDERSTANDING!

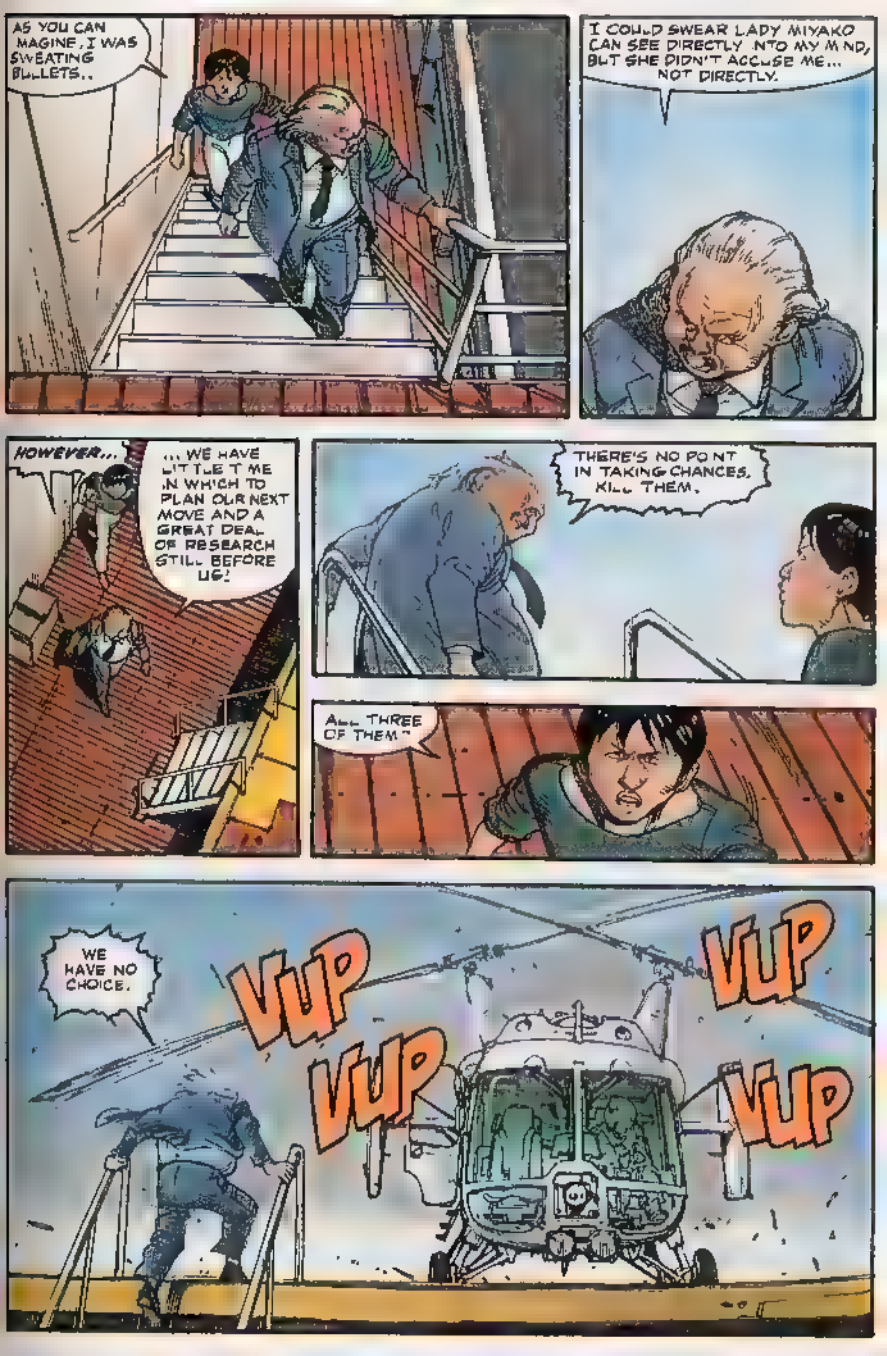

AKIRA HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED! YOU'VE ALL SEEN THE VIDEO!
KIDNAPPED BY CHILDREN! WHAT YOU FAILED TO DO IS PRESENT ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE PEOPLE WE SAW POSE A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY!
I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT! I KNOW AKIRA, AND I KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HIM!
IF WE DON'T ACT QUICKLY, IT WILL BE TOO LATE! GIVE ME BACK MY COMMAND!
OUT OF THE QUESTION
OUR DECISION IS FINAL.
AKIRA IS OFFICIALLY DEAD, KILLED BY SOL.
ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR US TO ATTACH THE BLAME, WE'VE ATTACHED IT TO YOU, COLONEL, AND THAT ELIMINATES ANY CHANCE OF YOUR REGAINING COMMAND.
AKIRA IS SOMEWHERE IN NEO-TOKYO! DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THAT MEANS?! WE'RE ON THE BRINK OF CATASTROPHE!
YOU MUST REINSTATE THE CODE SEVEN EMERGENCY ALERT! FIND AKIRA WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!

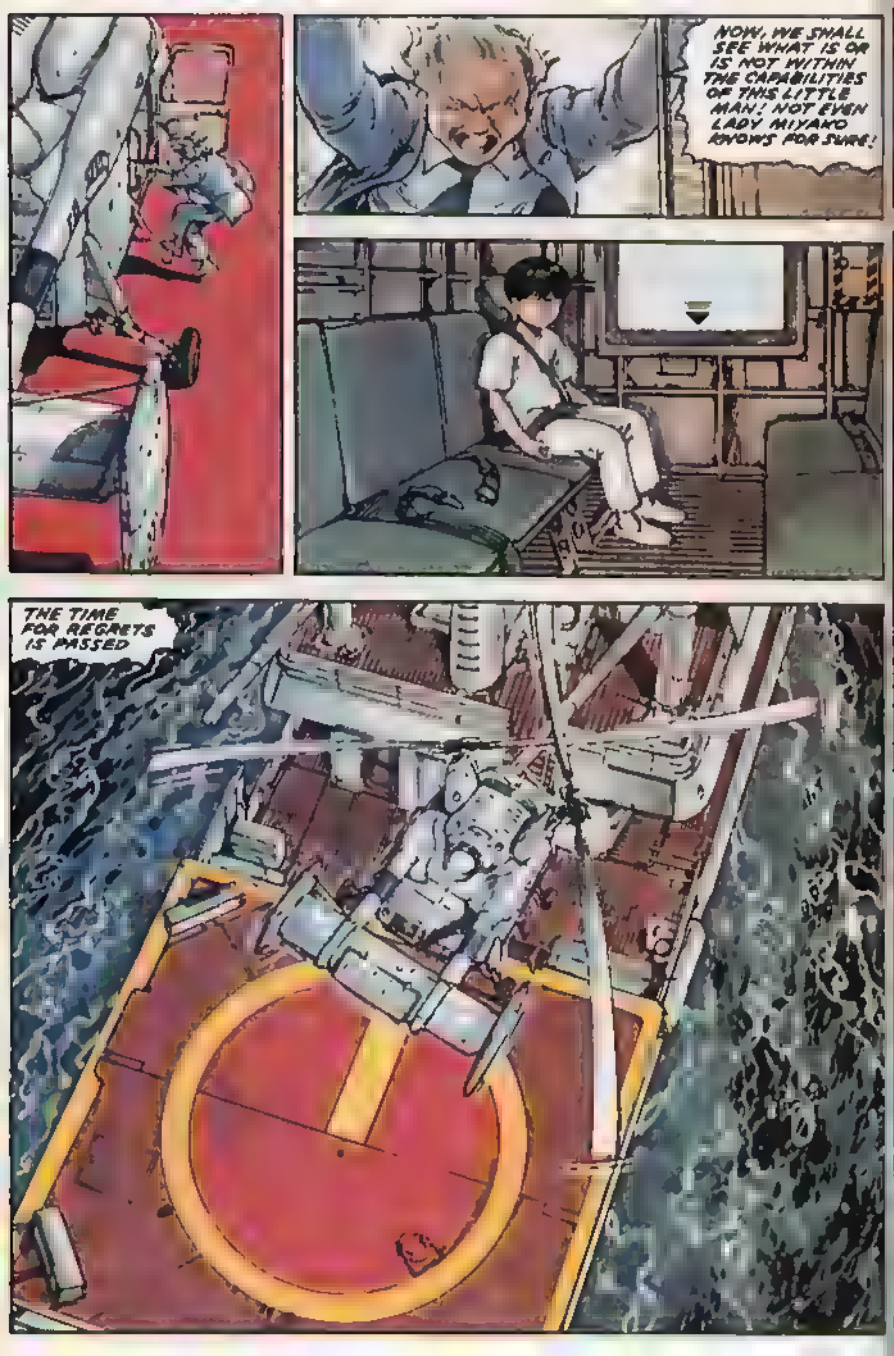
SCRAPE
SLAM
ARROGANT FOOLS!
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
IN SESSION AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY
"IN LIGHT OF THE PREVAILING SOCIAL CLIMATE WE MUST LEFT MARTIAL LAW BY TOMORROW.
tak
tak
tak
tak
LESS PRESSING CONCERNS CAN WAIT UNTIL A LATER DATE COLONEL YOU WILL BE PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST I SUGGEST YOU TRY TO RELAX"

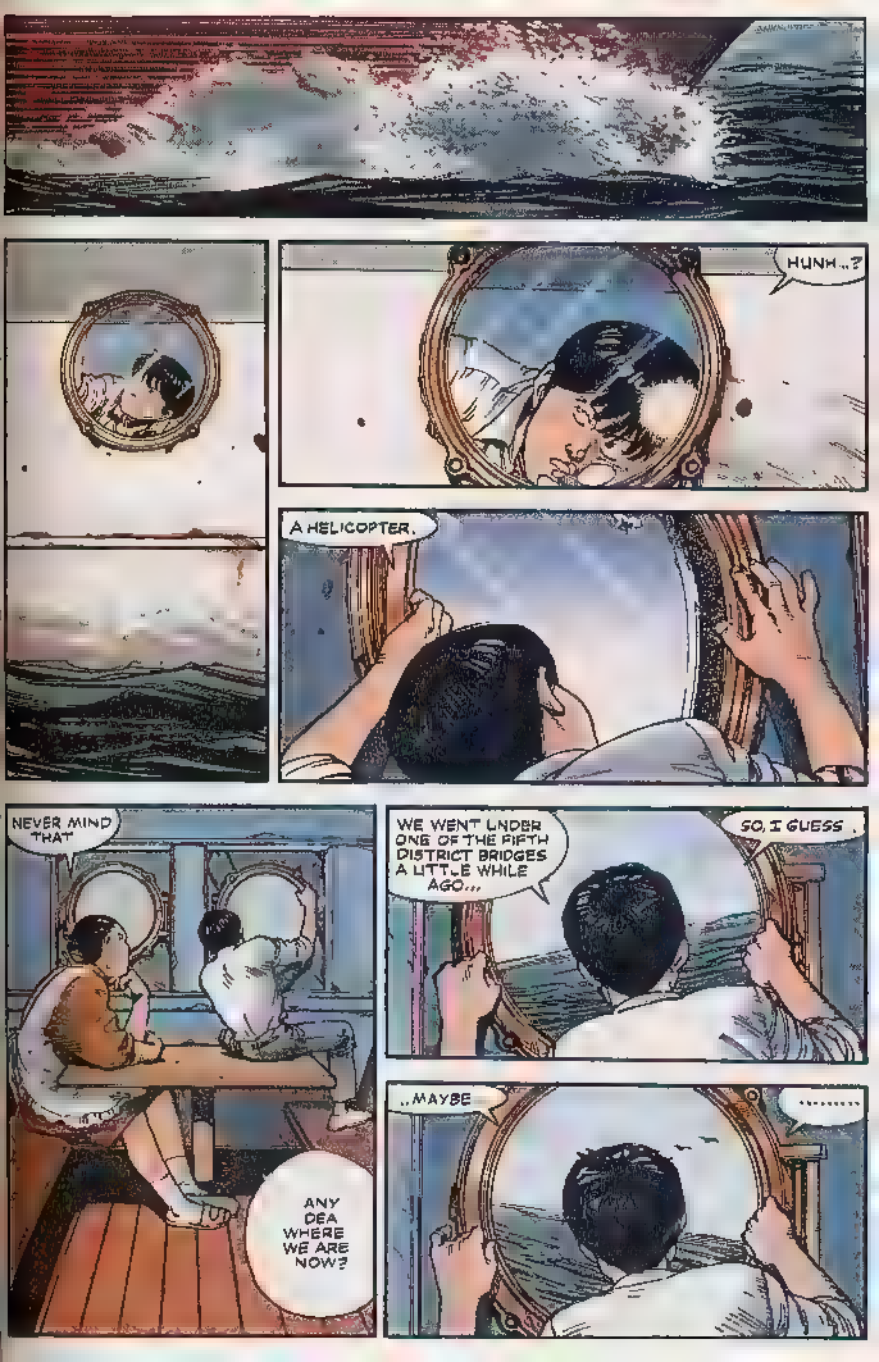

CONTACT THE LEADERS OF EVERY UNIT. WE'LL MEET TONIGHT AT MY HOUSE.
?!
I'LL NEED AT LEAST 70% OF THEM IN ATTENDANCE. IF ANYONE CLAIMS HE CAN'T COME, HAVE HIM SWEAR AN OATH OF LOYALTY AND HAVE SOMEONE YOU'RE SURE OF TAIL HIM AT ALL TIMES. THIS MUST REMAIN ABSOLUTELY TOP SECRET ...UNDERSTOOD?
YES, COLONEL!
I...OVERHEARD WHAT HAPPENED, SIR. AND THEY CALL THEMSELVES LEADERS! WHAT A FIASCO!
I HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN LISTEN TO YOU CHATTER. GO!
YESSIR!

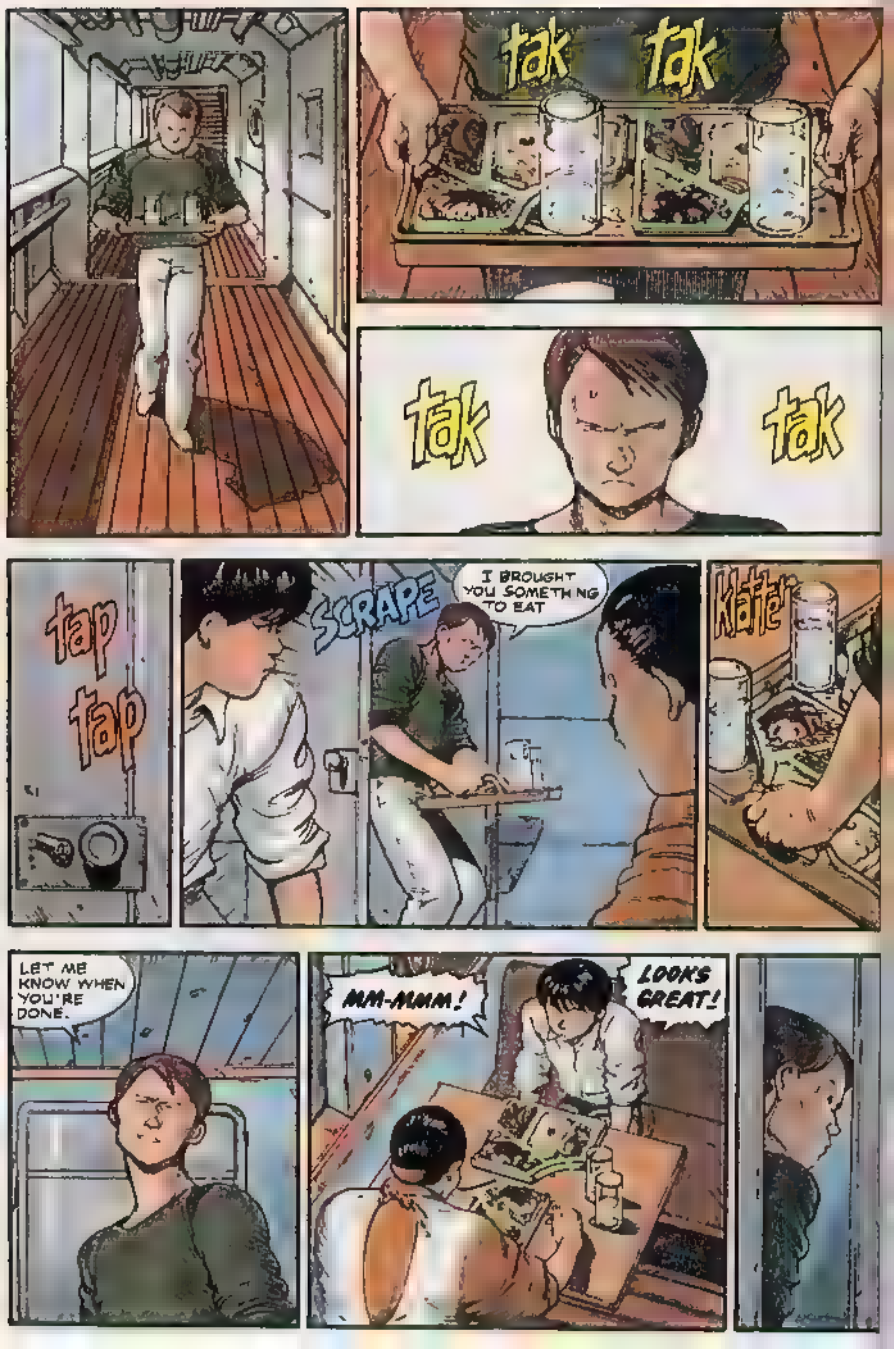

DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO COME ALONE ?
YES BUT LAST NIGHT
NEVER MIND
NOW THEN


...MM-HMM..
I WAS SURPRISED HE IS A CHILD TOO; BUT HE IS AKIRA. I'M SURE.
HMM...
UNTIL WE EXAMINE HIM THOROUGHLY WE CAN'T BE CERTAIN.
I'M HUNGRY.

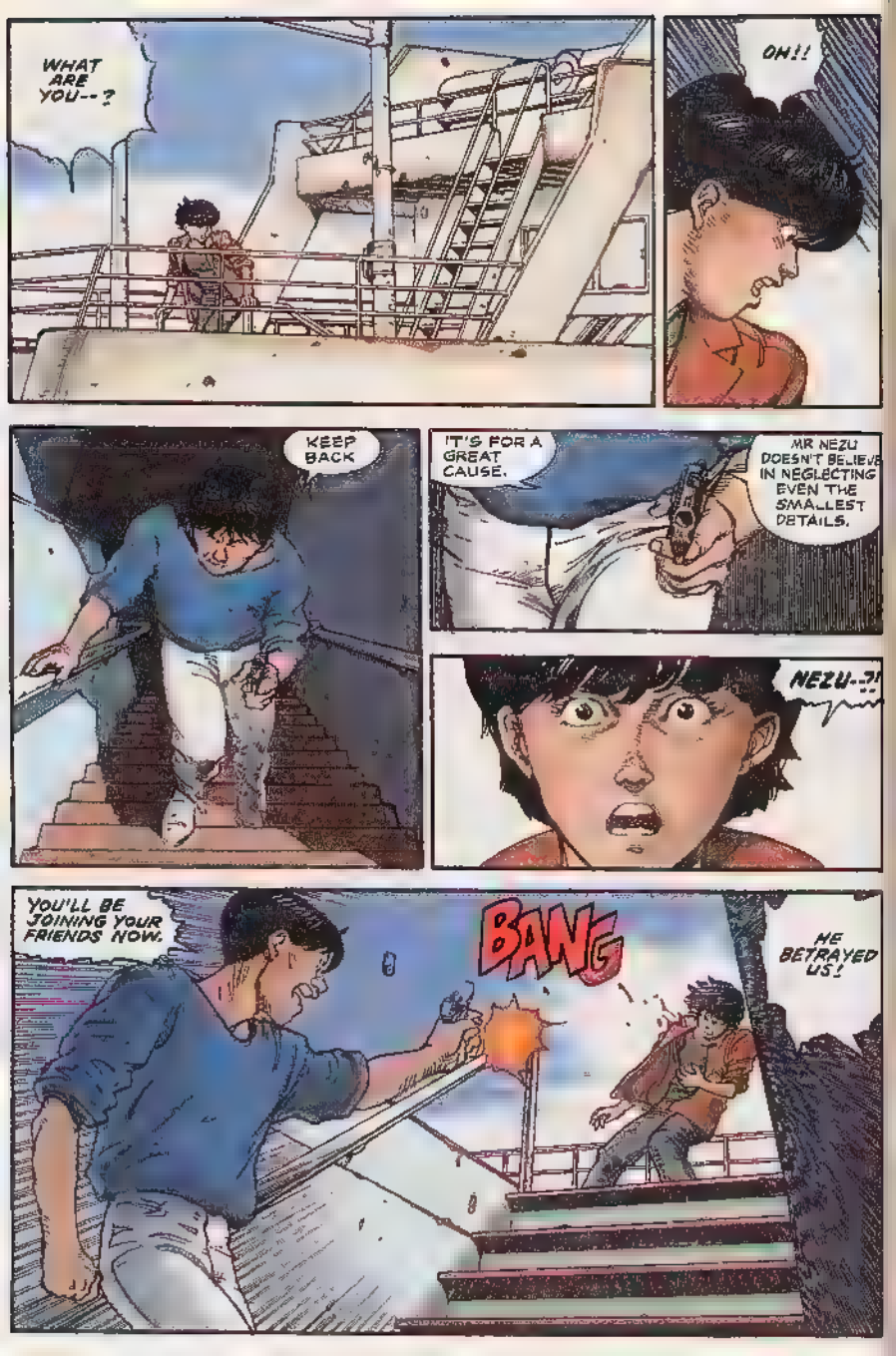

AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, I WAS SWEATING BULLETS..
I COULD SWEAR LADY MIYAKO CAN SEE DIRECTLY INTO MY MIND, BUT SHE DIDN'T ACCUSE ME... NOT DIRECTLY.
HOWEVER...
... WE HAVE LITTLE TIME IN WHICH TO PLAN OUR NEXT MOVE AND A GREAT DEAL OF RESEARCH STILL BEFORE US!
THERE'S NO POINT IN TAKING CHANCES. KILL THEM.
ALL THREE OF THEM."
WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
VUP
VUP
VUP
VUP

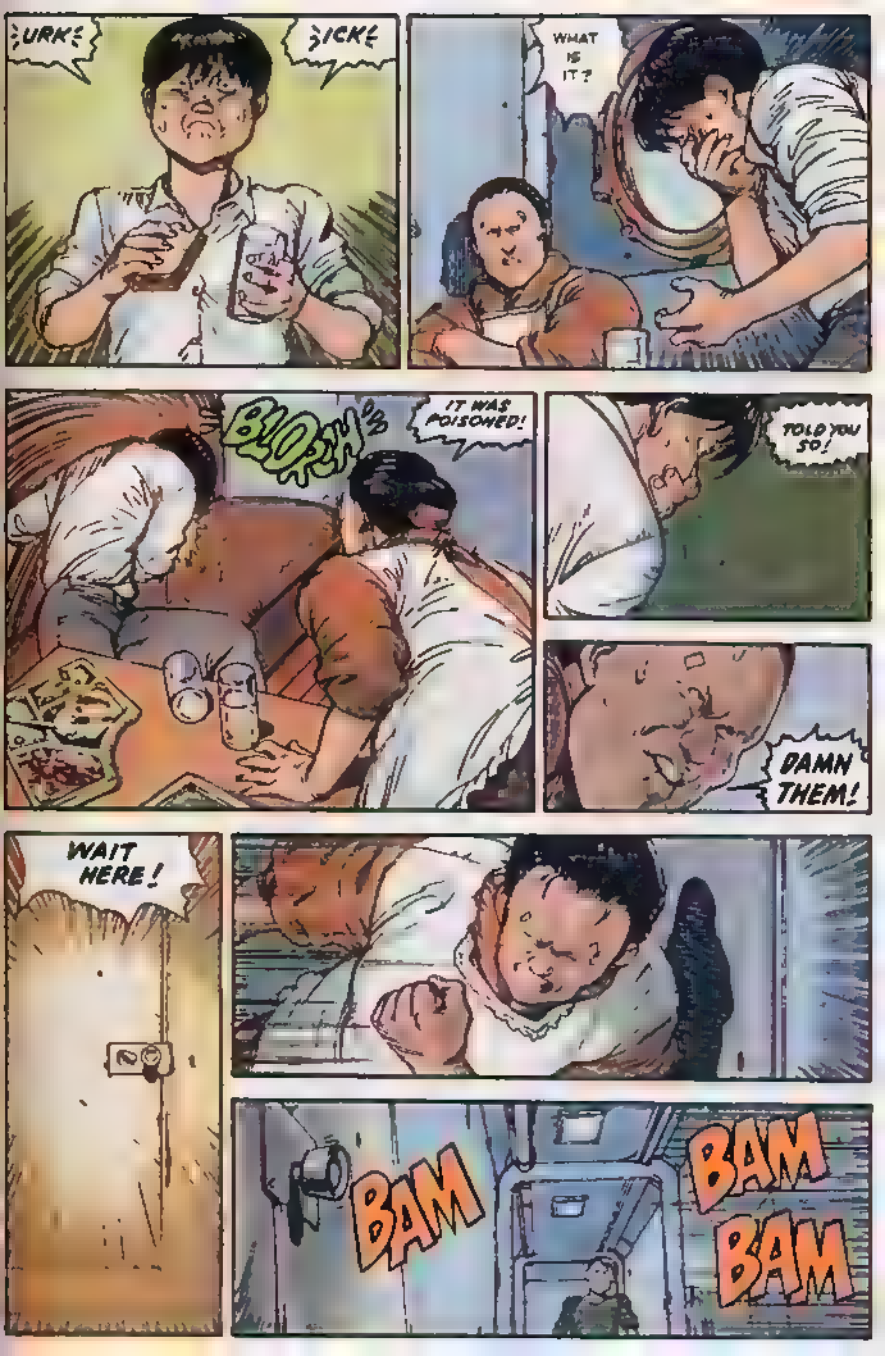

NOW, WE SHALL SEE WHAT IS OR IS NOT WITHIN THE CAPABILITIES OF THIS LITTLE MAN! NOT EVEN LADY MIYAKO KNOWS FOR SURE!
THE TIME FOR REGRETS IS PASSED

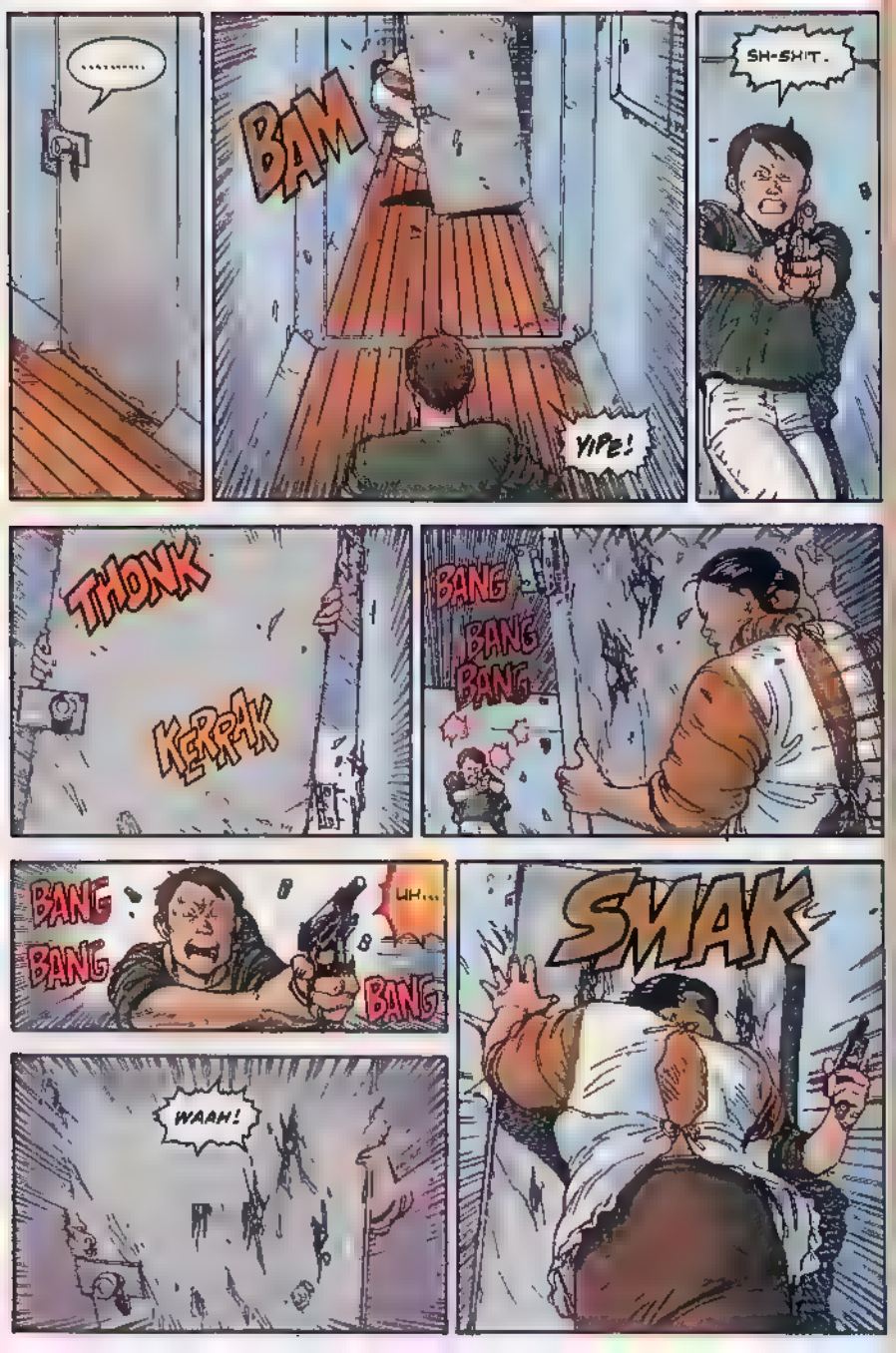

HUNH..?
A HELICOPTER.
NEVER MIND THAT
ANY IDEA WHERE WE ARE NOW?
WE WENT UNDER ONE OF THE FIFTH DISTRICT BRIDGES A LITTLE WHILE AGO...
SO, I GUESS
..MAYBE
.....

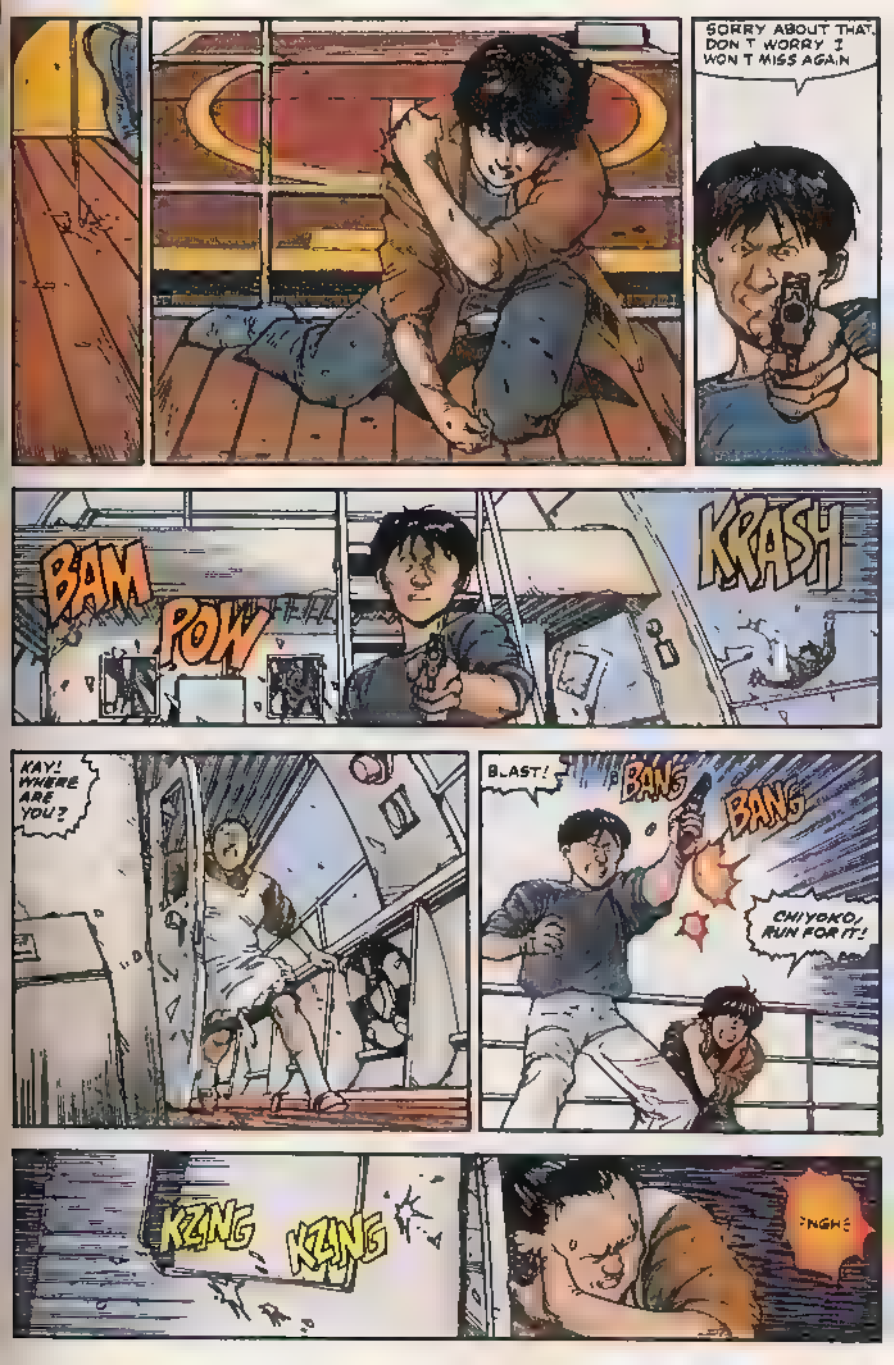

tak tak
tak tak
tap tap
SCRAPE
I BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING TO EAT
klafer
LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU'RE DONE.
MM-MMM!
LOOKS GREAT!

=Sniff sniff=
IT PAYS TO BE CAREFUL. OTHERWISE WE COULD END UP DEAD.
Y'KNOW, IT'S REALLY GOOD.
OH, COME OFF IT. DO YOU REALLY THINK THEY POISONED IT?
Chomp
Chomp
MUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH
MM-MMM
EH?
WHY ARE WE GOING THIS WAY? MY FRIENDS ARE DOWNSTAIRS
THEY'VE ALREADY LEFT THE BOAT


WHAT ARE YOU--?
OH!!
KEEP BACK
IT'S FOR A GREAT CAUSE.
MR NEZU DOESN'T BELIEVE IN NEGLECTING EVEN THE SMALLEST DETAILS.
NEZU--?!
YOU'LL BE JOINING YOUR FRIENDS NOW.
BANG
HE BETRAYED US!

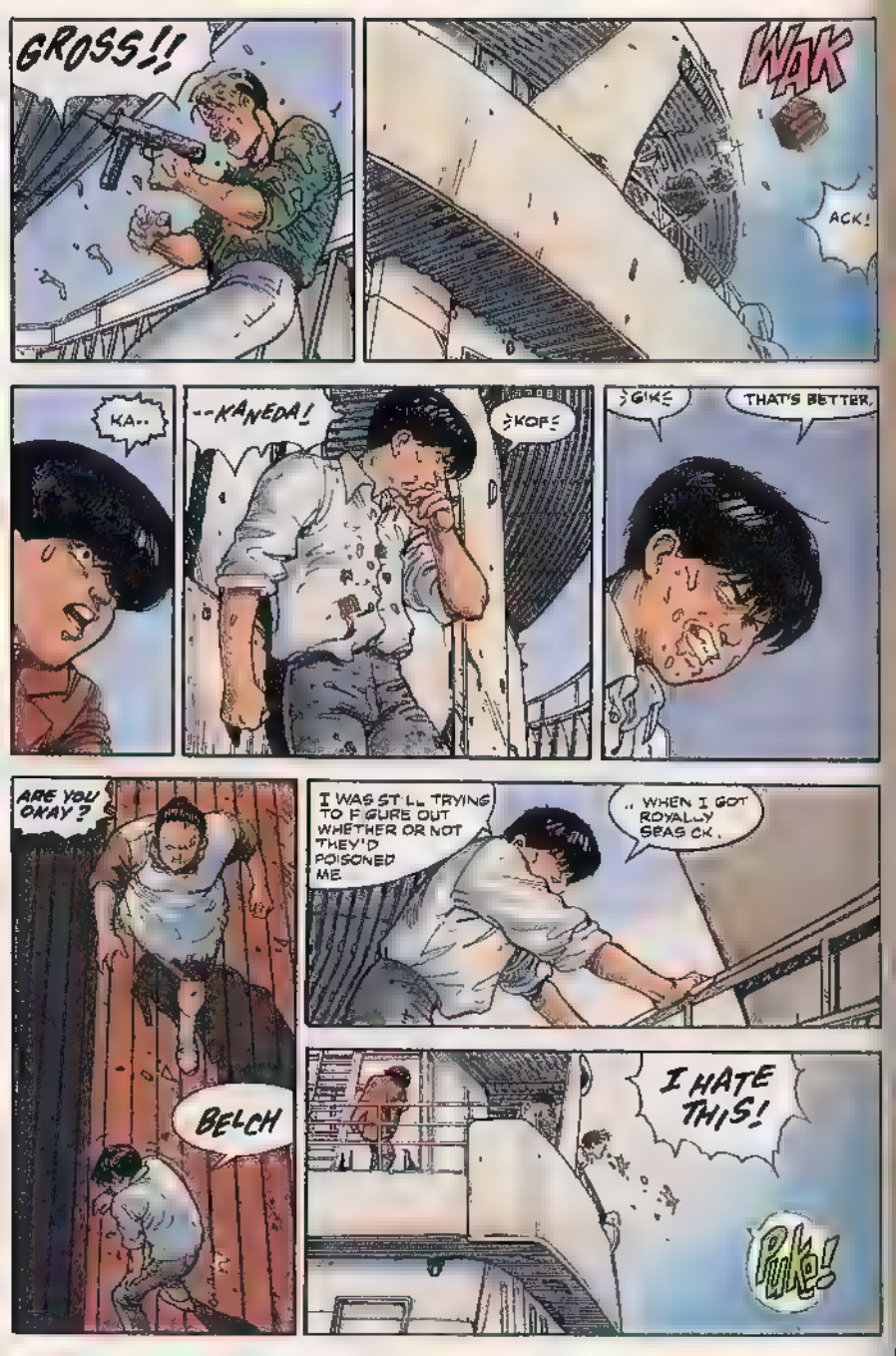

URK!
SICK!
WHAT IS IT?
BLORK!
IT WAS POISONED!
TOLD YOU SO!
DAMN THEM!
WAIT HERE!
BAM
BAM
BAM

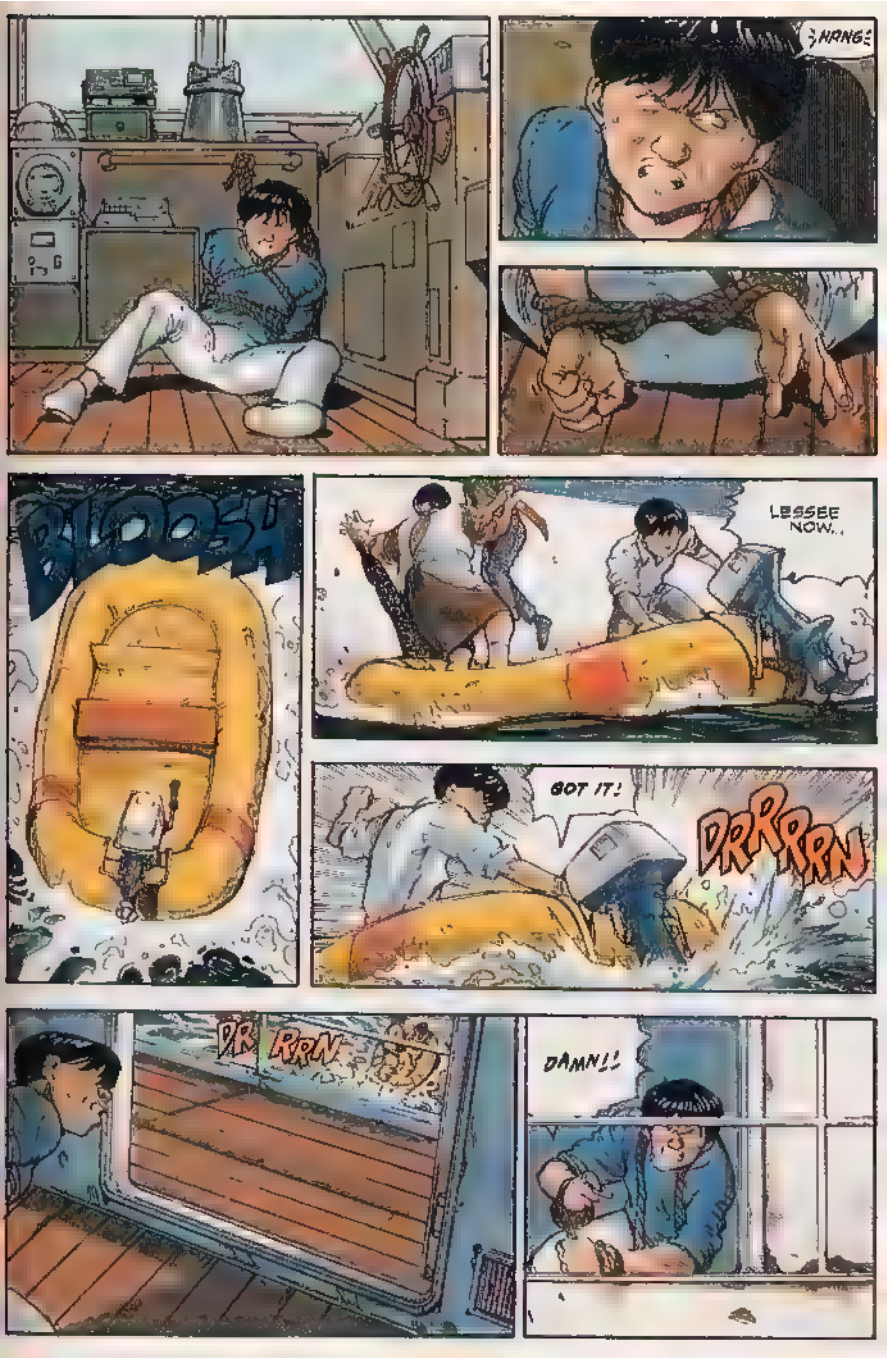

.....
BAM
YIPE!
SH-SHIT.
THONK
KERPHK
BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG
UH...
WAAH!
SMAK

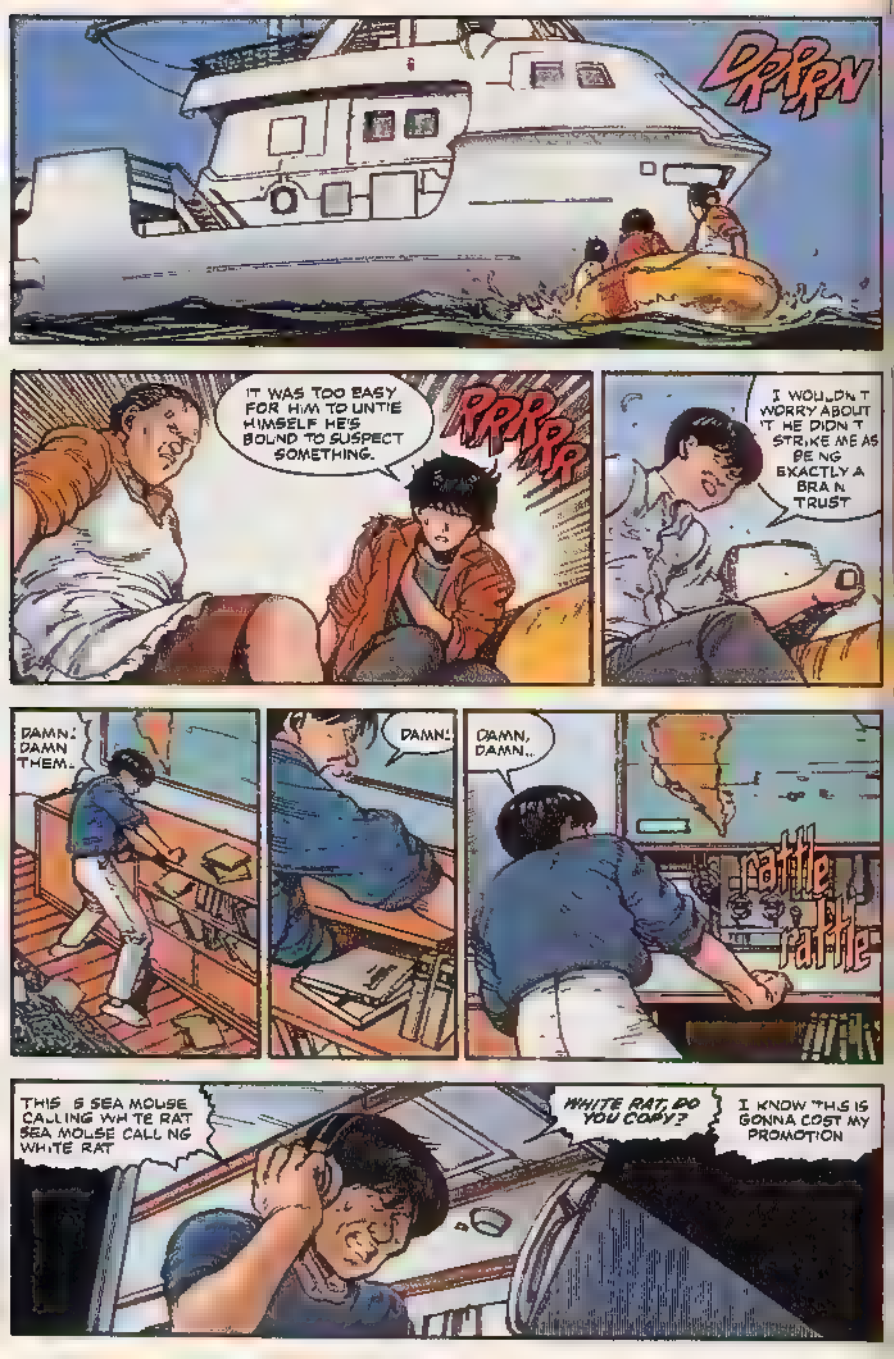

SORRY ABOUT THAT. DON'T WORRY I WON'T MISS AGAIN
BAM
POW
KRASH
KAY! WHERE ARE YOU?
BLAST!
BANG
BANG
CHIYOKO, RUN FOR IT!
KZING
KZING
NGH!

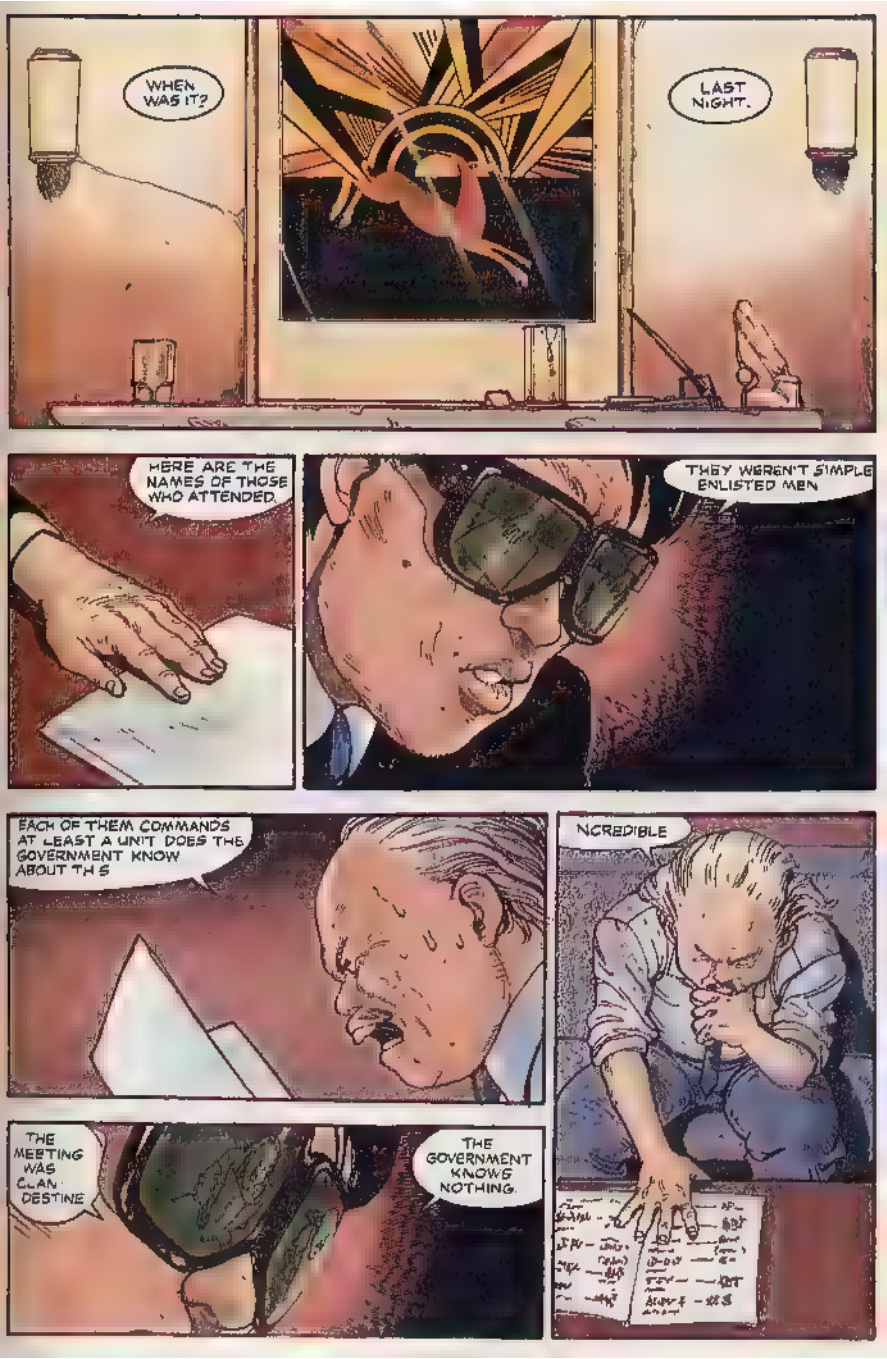
BANG BANG BANG
!
LIFEBOAT
PUFF
PUFF
KLAK
YAHH!
SHOO
BANG
BANG
THOP
HUHH?
SHOOOP
AUUGH!

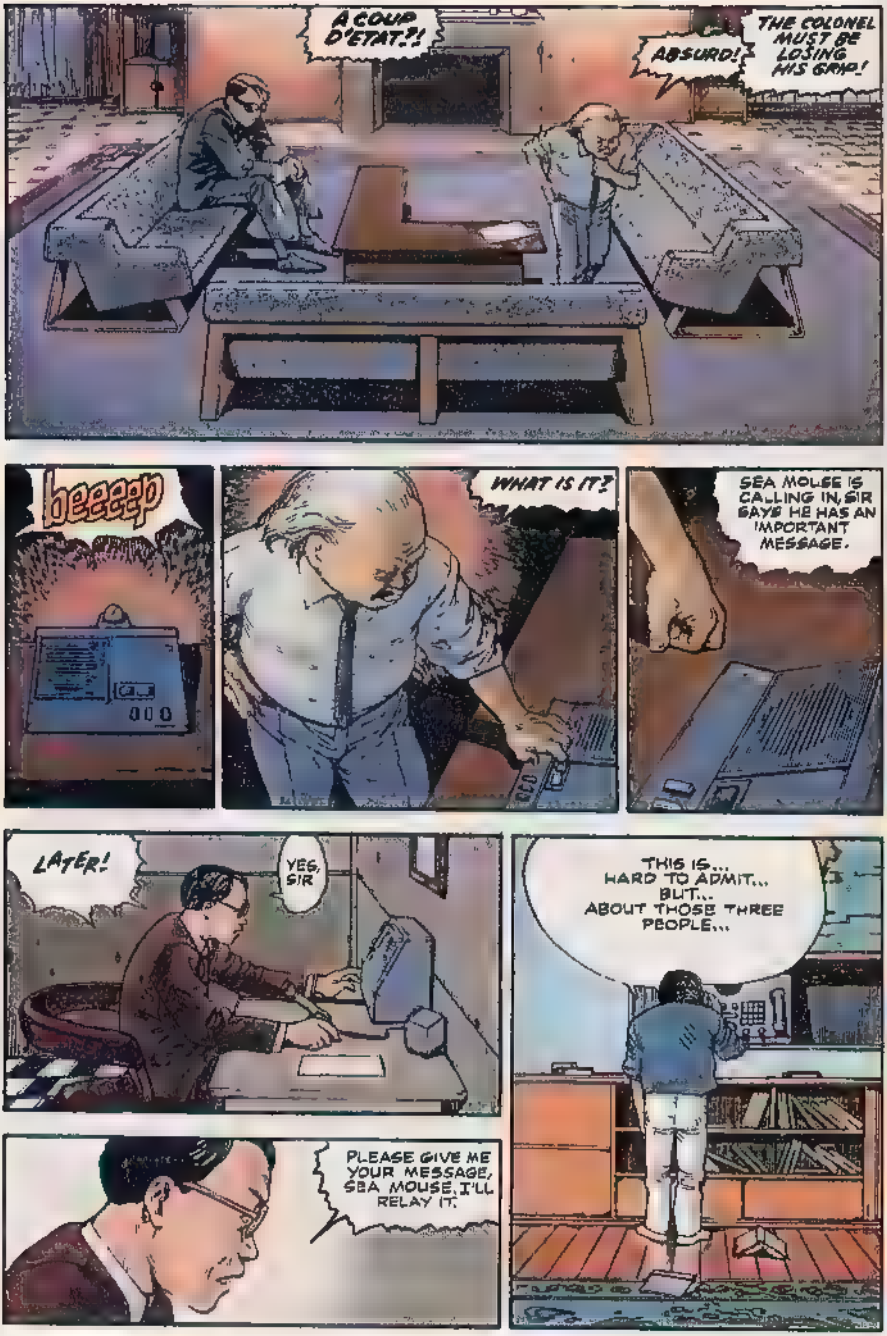
BAP
FREEZE!
A MACHINE GUN!
END OF THE LINE!
HUNH...?
BA-A-A-ARG
EEEW!


GROSS!!
WAK
ACK!
KA..
--KANEDA!
KOF
GIK
THAT'S BETTER.
ARE YOU OKAY?
BELCH
I WAS STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHETHER OR NOT THEY'D POISONED ME.
.. WHEN I GOT ROYALLY SEASICK.
I HATE THIS!
PUKO!

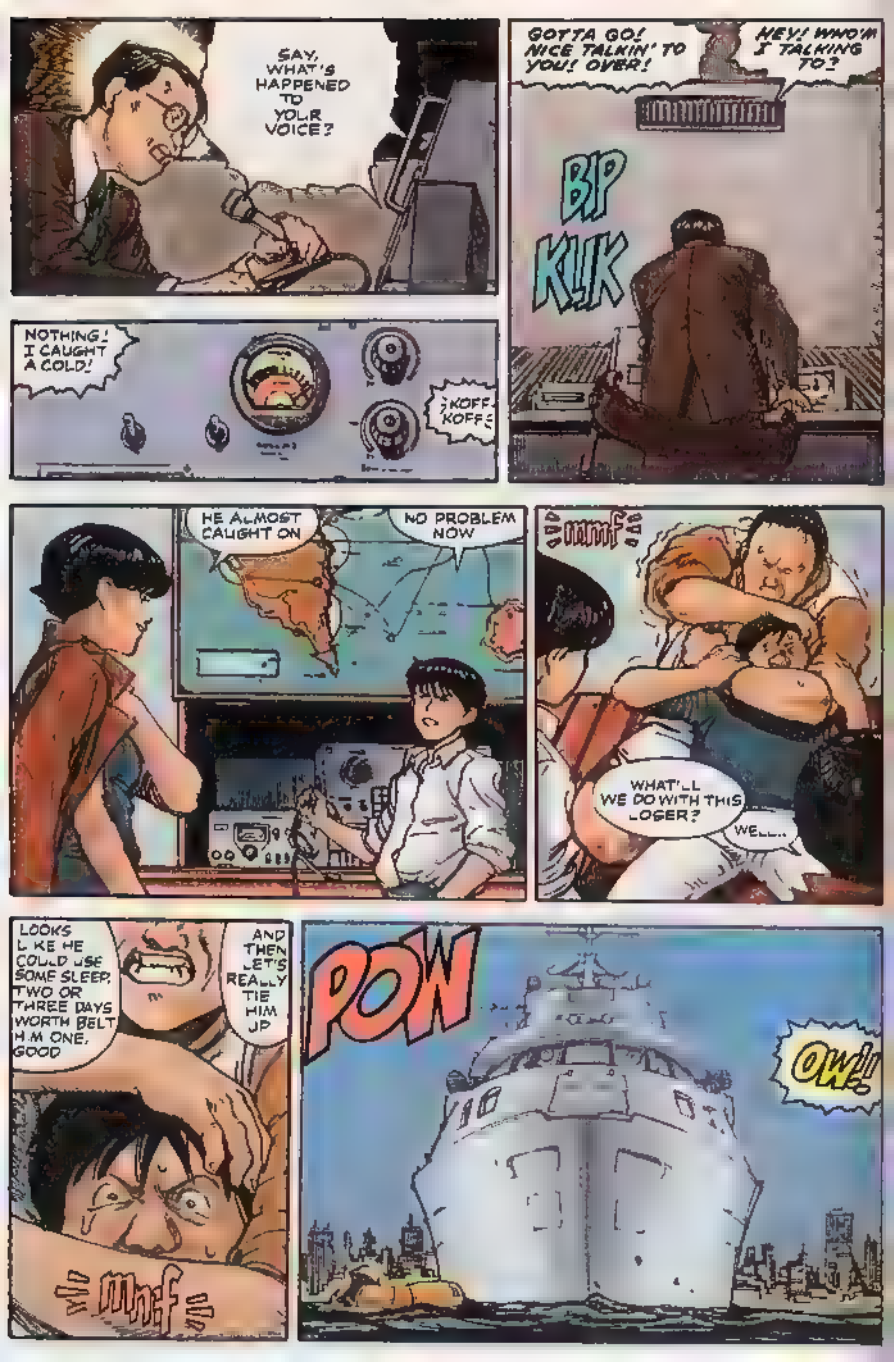

;NRNG!
WOOSH
LESSEE NOW..
GOT IT!
DRRRRRN
DR RRRN
DAMN!!

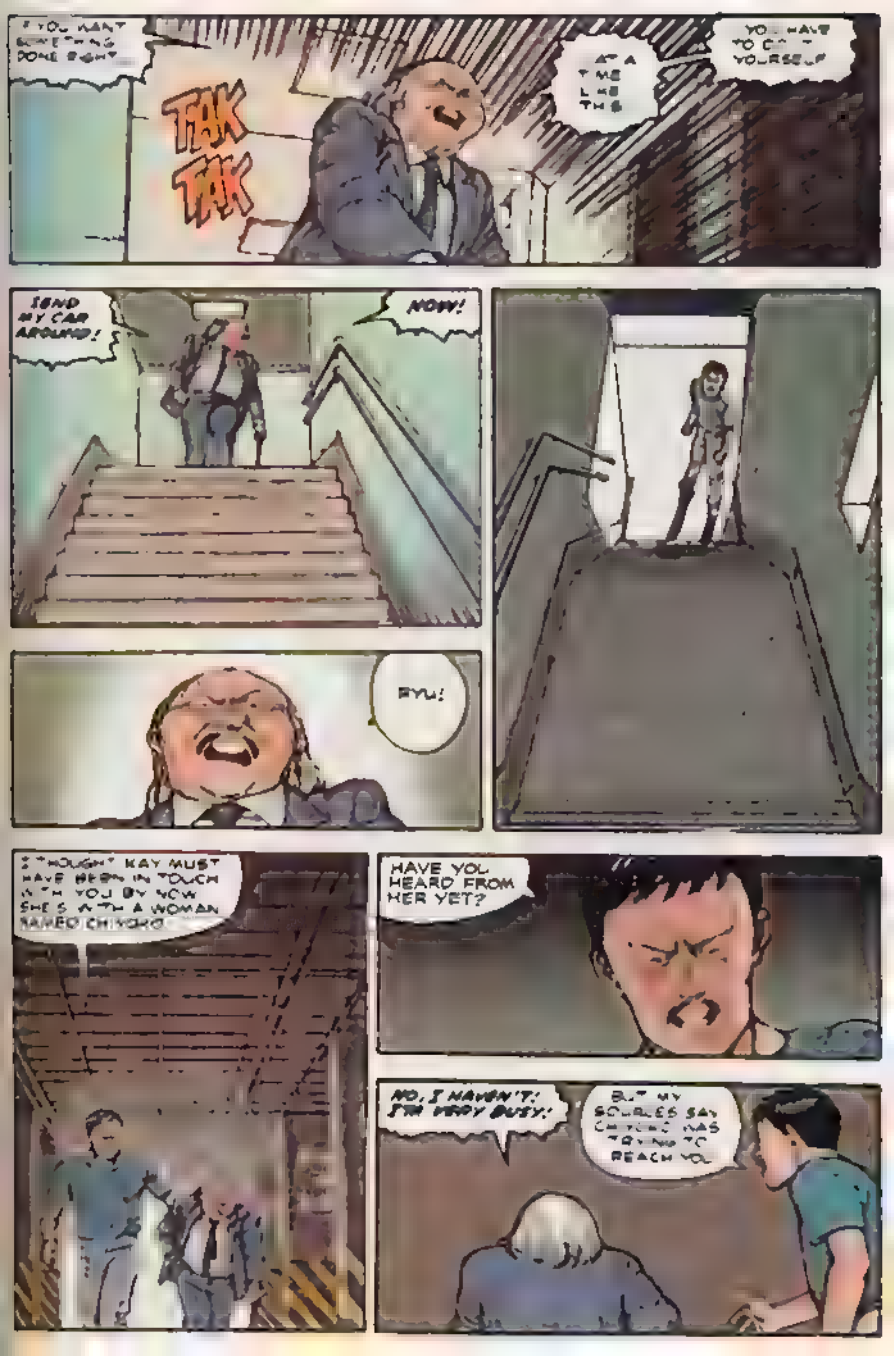

DRRRRN
IT WAS TOO EASY FOR HIM TO UNTIE HIMSELF HE'S BOUND TO SUSPECT SOMETHING.
RRRRRR
I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT HE DIDN'T STRIKE ME AS BEING EXACTLY A BRAIN TRUST
DAMN! DAMN THEM.
DAMN!
DAMN, DAMN..
rattle rattle
THIS IS SEA MOUSE CALLING WHITE RAT SEA MOUSE CALLING WHITE RAT
WHITE RAT, DO YOU COPY?
I KNOW THIS IS GONNA COST MY PROMOTION

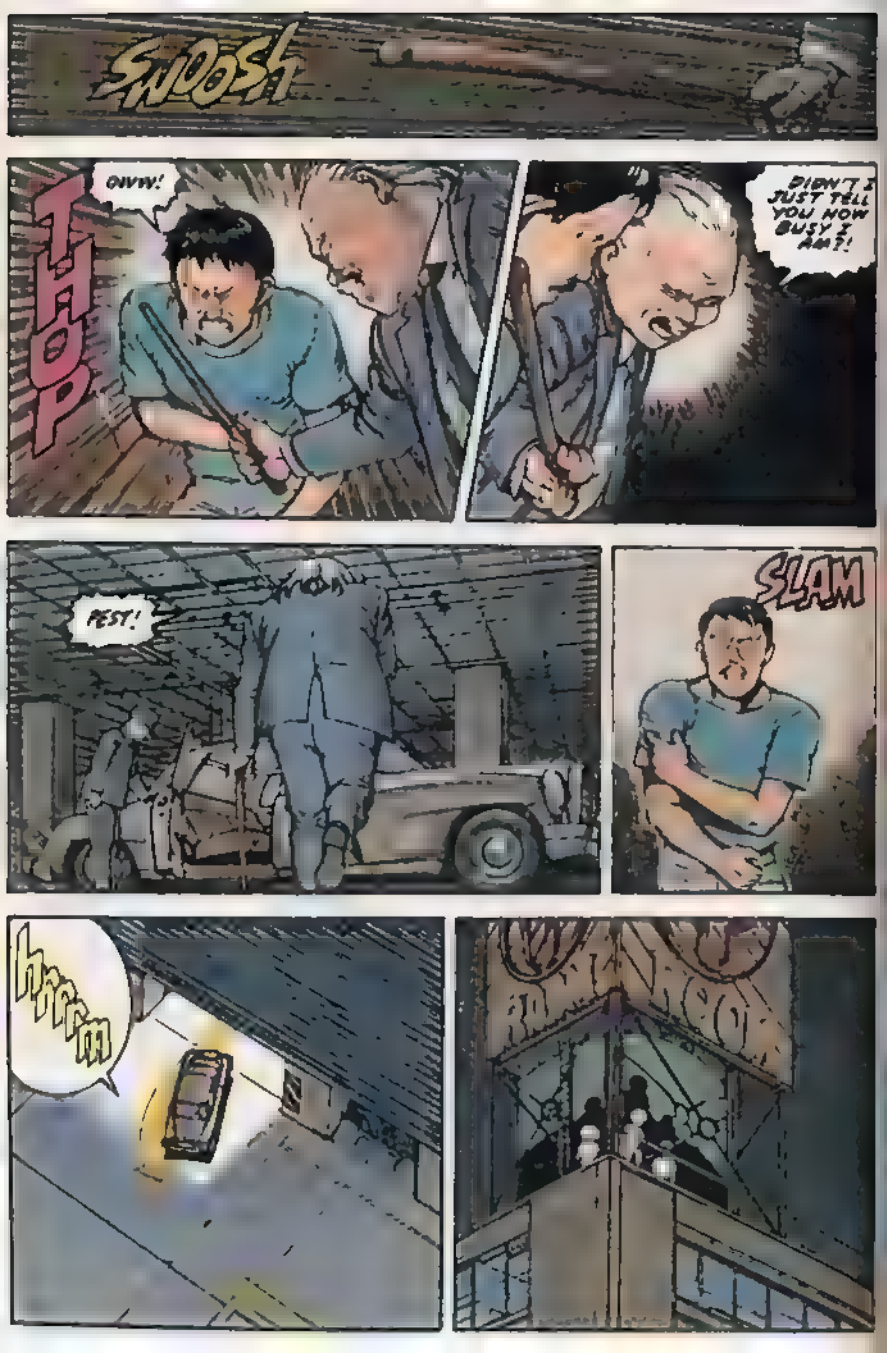

WHEN WAS IT?
LAST NIGHT.
HERE ARE THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED.
THEY WEREN'T SIMPLE ENLISTED MEN
EACH OF THEM COMMANDS AT LEAST A UNIT DOES THE GOVERNMENT KNOW ABOUT TH S
INCREDIBLE
THE MEETING WAS CLAN DESTINE
THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS NOTHING.


A COUP D'ETAT?!
ABSURD!
THE COLONEL MUST BE LOSING HIS GRIP!
beeeep
WHAT IS IT?
SEA MOUSE IS CALLING IN, SIR SAYS HE HAS AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE.
LATER!
YES, SIR
THIS IS... HARD TO ADMIT... BUT... ABOUT THOSE THREE PEOPLE...
PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR MESSAGE, SEA MOUSE. I'LL RELAY IT.

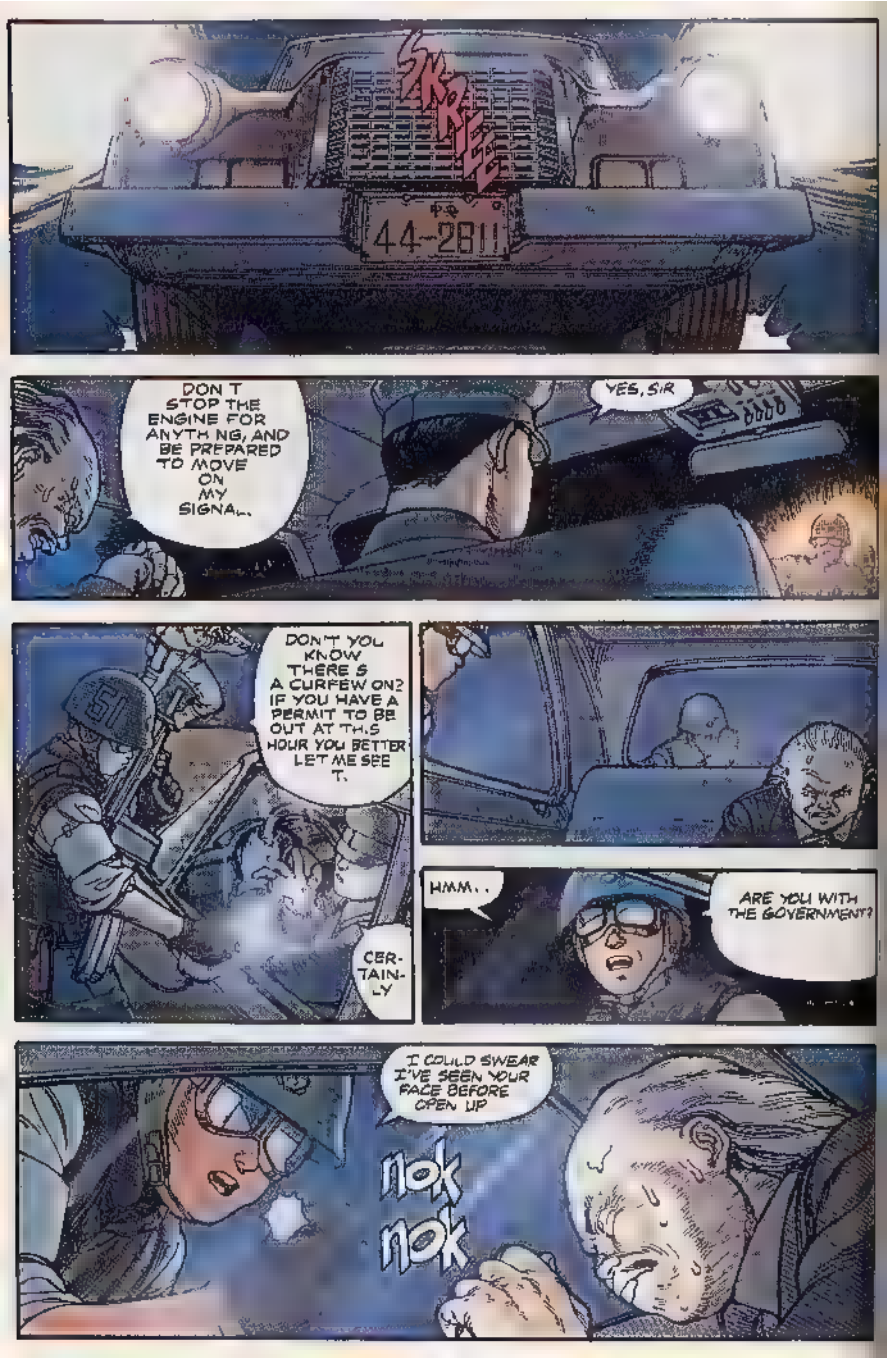
YOU LET THEM GET AWAY?!?
YES!
I'M SORRY! I PROMISE TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU!
YOU MORON! HOW COULD YOU LET A WOMAN AND TWO KIDS GET THE BETTER OF YOU?
I WAS ORDERED TO TAKE CARE OF AK RA AFTER I FINISHED UP HERE
WHERE IS HE NOW?
NINCOMPOOP!
HE'S AT MR. NEZU'S HOME!
UM... IN THE 48TH DISTRICT?
THE ELEVENTH DISTRICT!
...?...

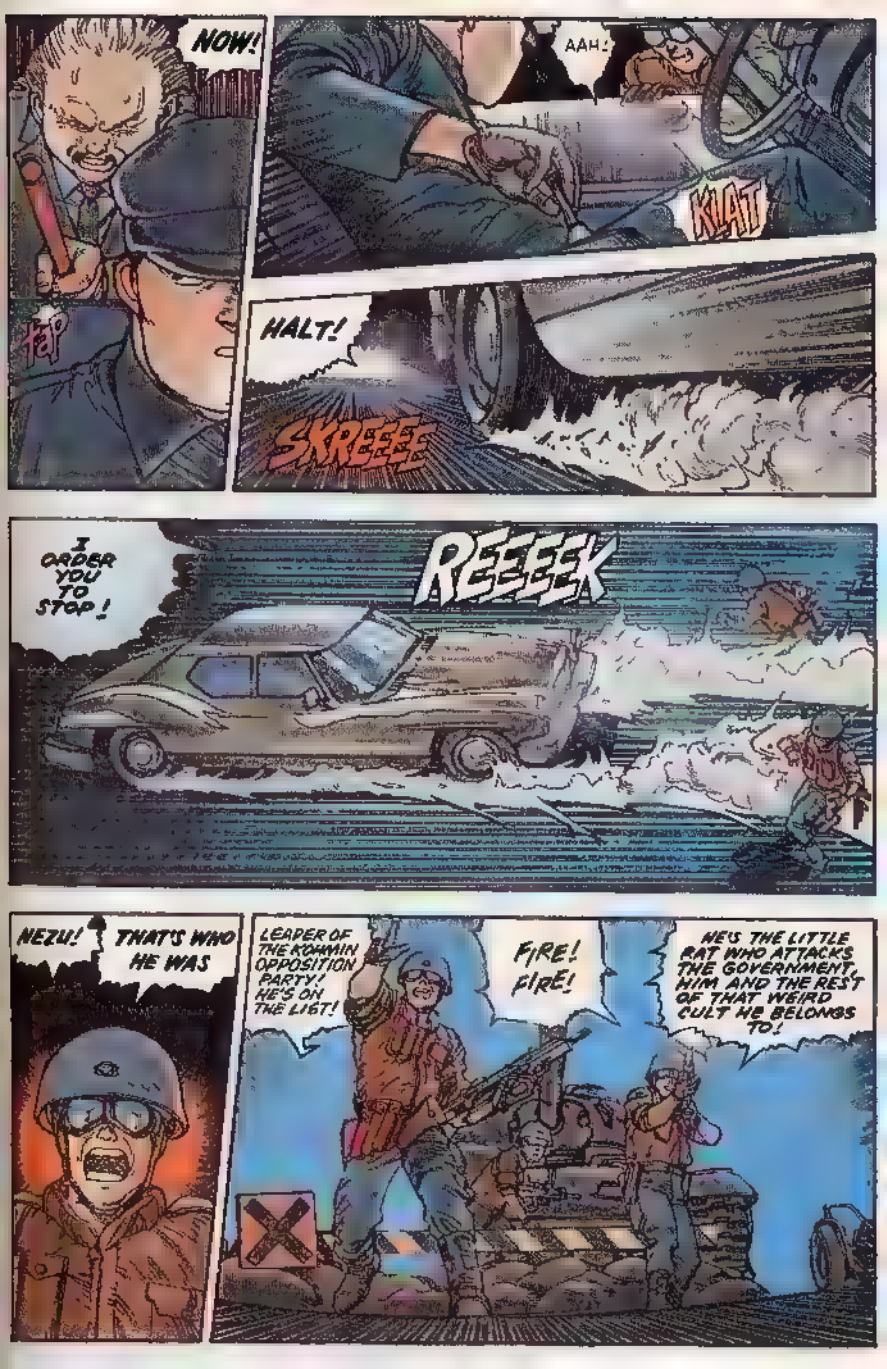

SAY, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR VOICE?
NOTHING! I CAUGHT A COLD!
KOFF KOFF
GOTTA GO! NICE TALKIN' TO YOU! OVER!
HEY! WHO'M I TALKING TO?
BIP
KLIK
HE ALMOST CAUGHT ON
NO PROBLEM NOW
mmf
WHAT'LL WE DO WITH THIS LOSER?
WELL...
LOOKS LIKE HE COULD USE SOME SLEEP, TWO OR THREE DAYS WORTH BELT HIM ONE, GOOD
AND THEN LET'S REALLY TIE HIM UP
mmf
POW
OW!

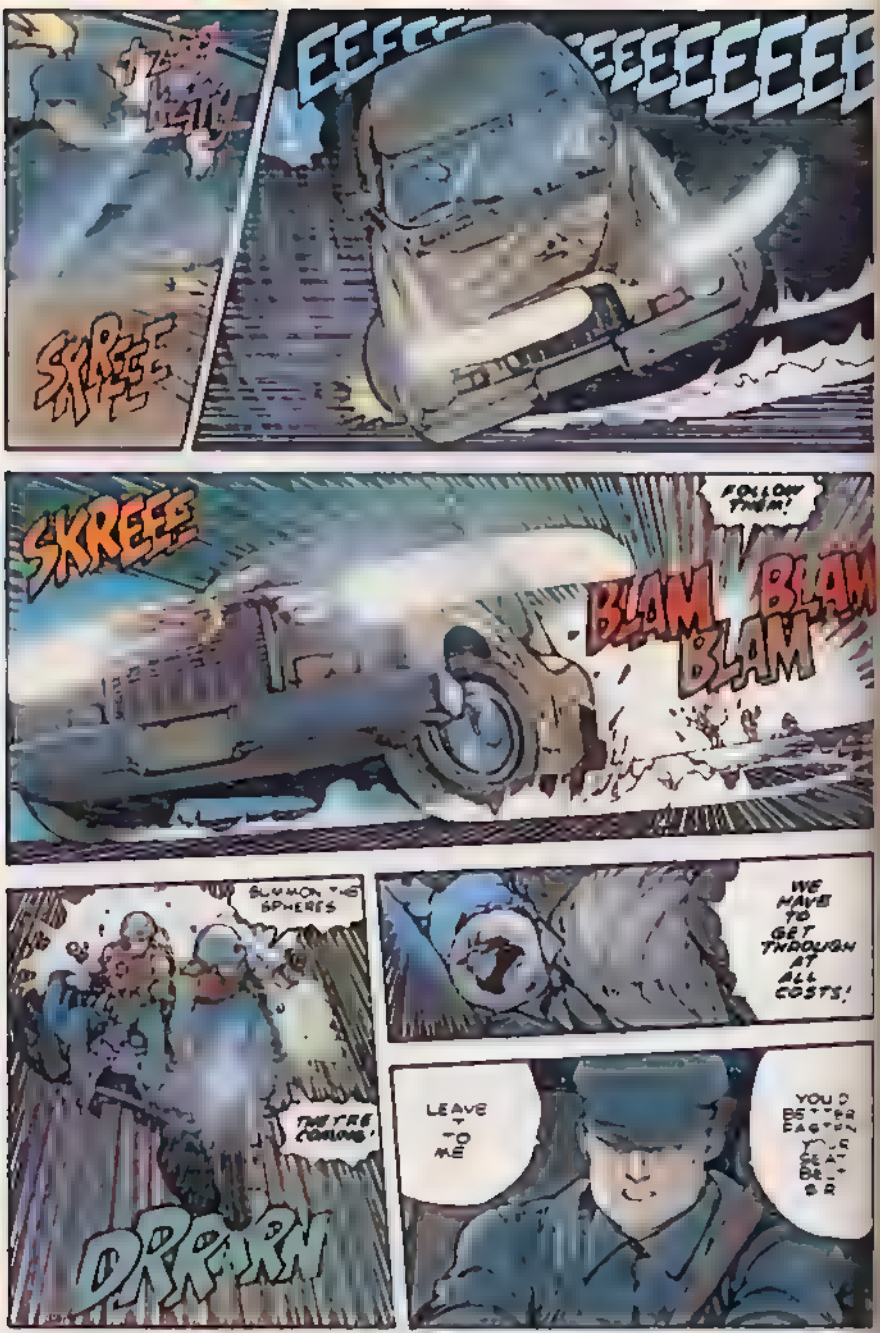

IF YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE RIGHT
TAK TAK
AT A TIME LIKE THIS
YOU HAVE TO DO IT YOURSELF
SEND MY CAR AROUND!
NOW!
RYU!
I THOUGHT KAY MUST HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH YOU BY NOW. SHE'S WITH A WOMAN NAMED CHIYOKO.
HAVE YOU HEARD FROM HER YET?
NO, I HAVEN'T! I'M VERY BUSY!
BUT MY SOURCES SAY CHIYOKO HAS BEEN TRYING TO REACH YOU.


SWOOSH
THOP
OWW!
DIDN'T I JUST TELL YOU HOW BUSY I AM?!
PEST!
SLAM
BRRRM

ROAD-BLOCK, SIR.
WHY WOULD THERE BE A
NOW WHAT?
...HMM...
WHAT IS THAT?!


SKRZZ
44-2811
DON T STOP THE ENGINE FOR ANYTH NG, AND BE PREPARED TO MOVE ON MY SIGNAL.
YES, SIR
DON'T YOU KNOW THERE S A CURFEW ON? IF YOU HAVE A PERMIT TO BE OUT AT TH.S HOUR YOU BETTER LET ME SEE T.
CER-TAIN-LY
HMM..
ARE YOU WITH THE GOVERNMENT?
I COULD SWEAR I'VE SEEN YOUR FACE BEFORE OPEN UP
nok
nok


NOW!
tap
AAH!
KLAT!
HALT!
SKREEE
I ORDER YOU TO STOP!
REEEEK
NEZU!
THAT'S WHO HE WAS
LEADER OF THE KOHMIN OPPOSITION PARTY! HE'S ON THE LIST!
FIRE! FIRE!
HE'S THE LITTLE RAT WHO ATTACKS THE GOVERNMENT, HIM AND THE REST OF THAT WEIRD CULT HE BELONGS TO!

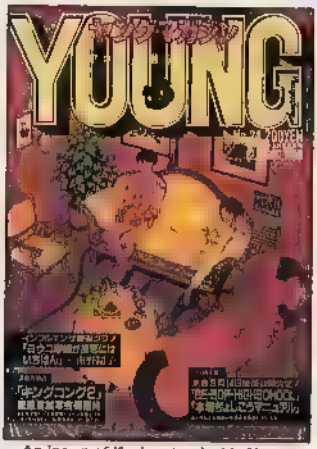


NEXT ISSUE **CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE**

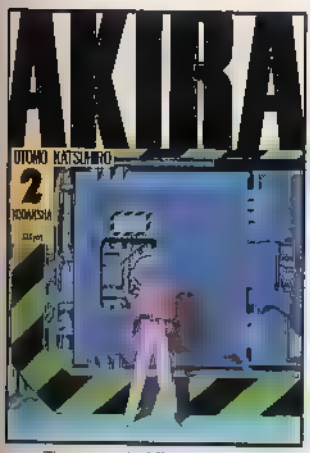
THE MAKING OF AKIRA THE EPIC COMIC PART I

The publishing of Katsuhiro Otomo's **Akira** in the United States requires much more time and effort than a standard comic book reprint. Before American audiences see the final product, it has gone through a complex "Westernization" procedure.

In Japan, **Akira** is first serialized in 20 page black-and-white installments in Kodansha Ltd.'s **Young Magazine**. **Young Magazine** is a 300-page weekly aimed at high school and college students.

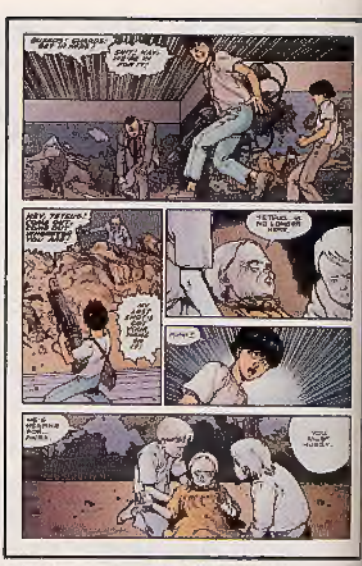


An issue of Kodansha Ltd.'s Young Magazine from December 1986



The second of five Japanese volumes of **Akira**

The serialized installments are collected into volumes of 300 to 400 pages each. A fifth and final volume is forthcoming, bringing the total number of pages in **Akira** up to 1800. The sales of these volumes in Japan have been phenomenal —the completed **Akira** saga will have a total of three and a half million copies in print.



An original page from Kodansha's **Akira** (left); a colored page from the Epic version (right).

Archie Goodwin, former Editor-in-Chief of Epic Comics, together with the staff of Kodansha, divided the volumes into 64 page sections for publication. Kodansha then provided "clean proofs" of the artwork.

Japanese comics are designed for lettering that reads vertically. Before sending the artwork to Epic, Mash•Room Co., Ltd., Otomo's own studio, removes all Japanese lettering, sound effects, and dialogue balloons.

The artwork is reversed through a camera process, so that **Akira** will reproduce from left to right. New artwork replaces the dialogue and sound effect balloons, and eventually new balloons will be drawn to hold horizontal lettering. The clean "mirror" proofs are then sent to Epic, along with the script translation.

Next month we will examine the translation, adaptation, and scripting process.

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writer/illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE
chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

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SATOSHI TAKABATAKE
assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA
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AKIRA SAITO
designer • Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd

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with LINDA M. YORK
translation

KOICHI YURI
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YUKA ANDO
editorial coordinator • Tokyo

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI
managing editor • New York

Epic Comics

JO DUFFY
english adaptation

STEVE OLIFF
with
GLORIA VASQUEZ
colorists

MICHAEL HIGGINS
letterer

HARRY CANDELARIO • STEVE ALEXANDROV
production

MARIE JAVINS
assistant editor

MARGARET CLARK
editor

CARL POTTS
executive editor

There is a shrill sound that fills the air and beats against the soul. It is the sound of panic that grips the terrified citizens of Neo-Tokyo. It is the sound of the caretaker robots who carry out their orders to "protect" regardless of who they destroy. It is the sound of gunfire that rattles against the asphalt as the struggle for who will control Akira rages. It is the sound of double speak shreaking against all logic as a government scrambles for high ground. It is sound and fury all for nothing against the power of Akira.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

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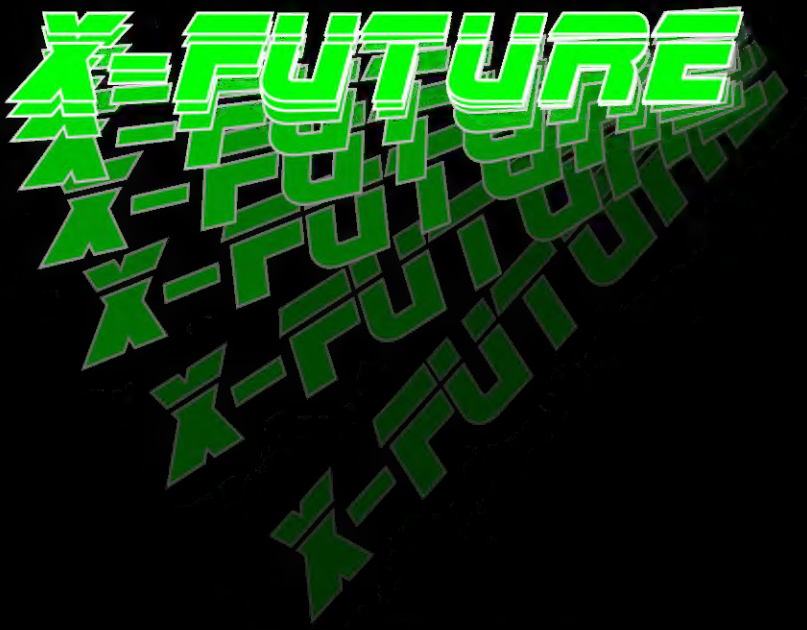

I love um

I buy um

I preserve um